Inio Asano

Born in 1980 in Ibaraki Prefecture. In high school, he submitted a short story to *Big Comic Spirits* and in 1998 debuted with a gag manga in *Big Comic Spirits Special Edition "Manpuku!"*

In 2001 his one-shot series, ***Subarashii Sekai*** (What a Wonderful World), began running in *Sunday GX*. The graphic novels have become a long-running hit and attracted a lot of notice. After ***Solanin*** ended in *Young Sunday*, ***Oyasumi Punpun*** began serialization in 2007. The series then moved to *Spirits*, where it is still ongoing. In addition, he has also written ***Hikari no Machi*** and ***Nijigahara Holograph*** (Eta Publishing) and has a level two abacus certificate.

Photo: Inio Asano

世界の終わりと夜明け前

浅野いにお

世界の終わりと夜明け前
浅野いにお

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

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小学館 SHOGAKUKAN

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世界の終わりと夜明け前

浅野いにお

搬入口
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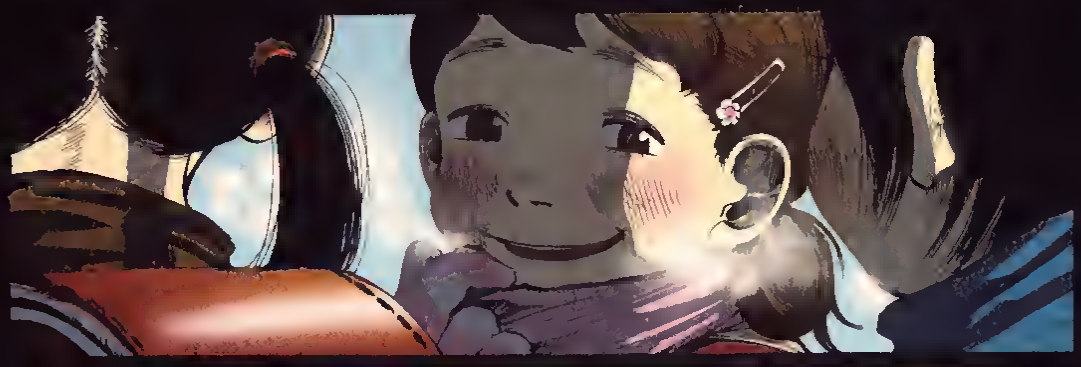

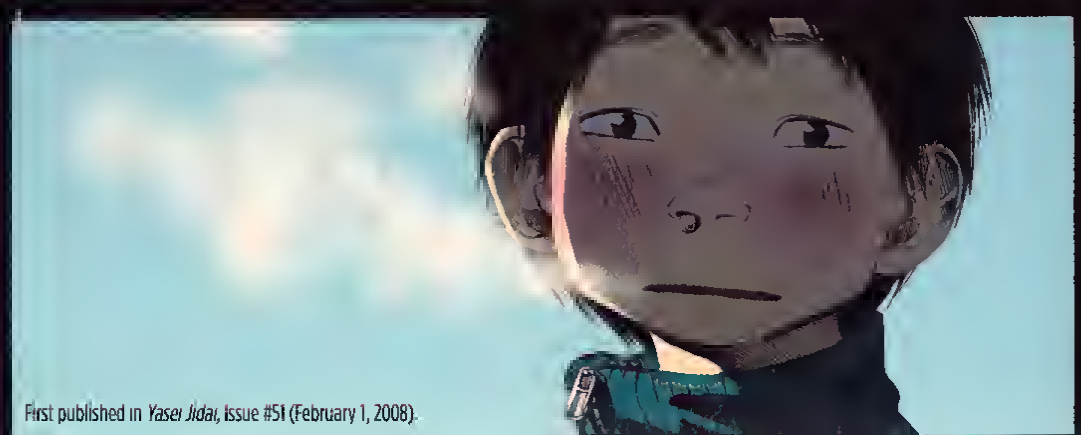

First published in *Yasei Jidai*, issue #51 (February 1, 2008).

BIG SPIRITS
COMICS
SPECIAL

Inio Asano

Before Dawn and the End of the World

Translation by
MEGCHAN
Lettering by
NOMAD SOUL
kotonoha.monkey-pirate.com

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Before Dawn

First published in *Big Comic Spirits Special Edition "Casual,"* Issue #14 (February 15, 2007).

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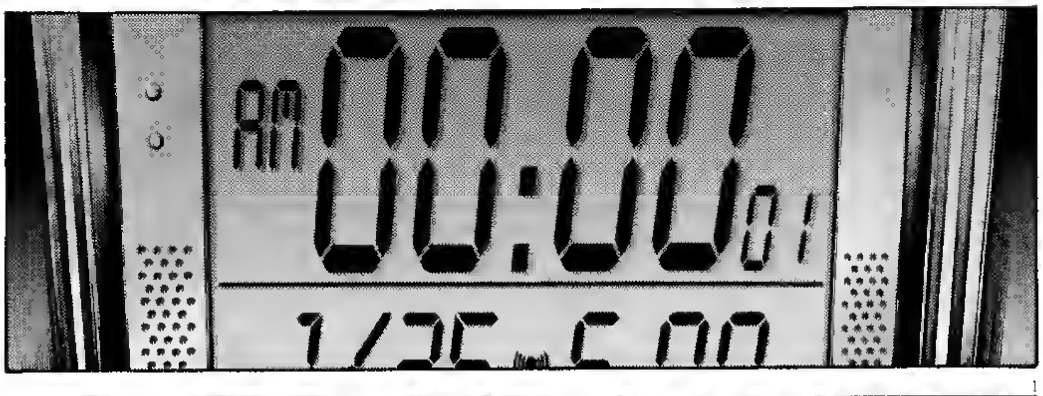
PM 11:59 59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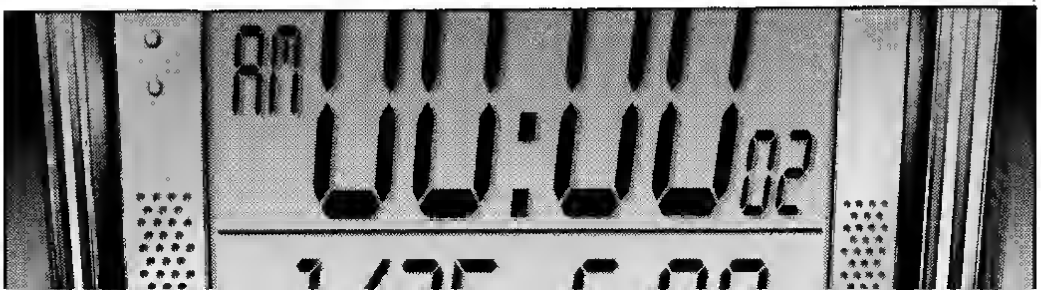
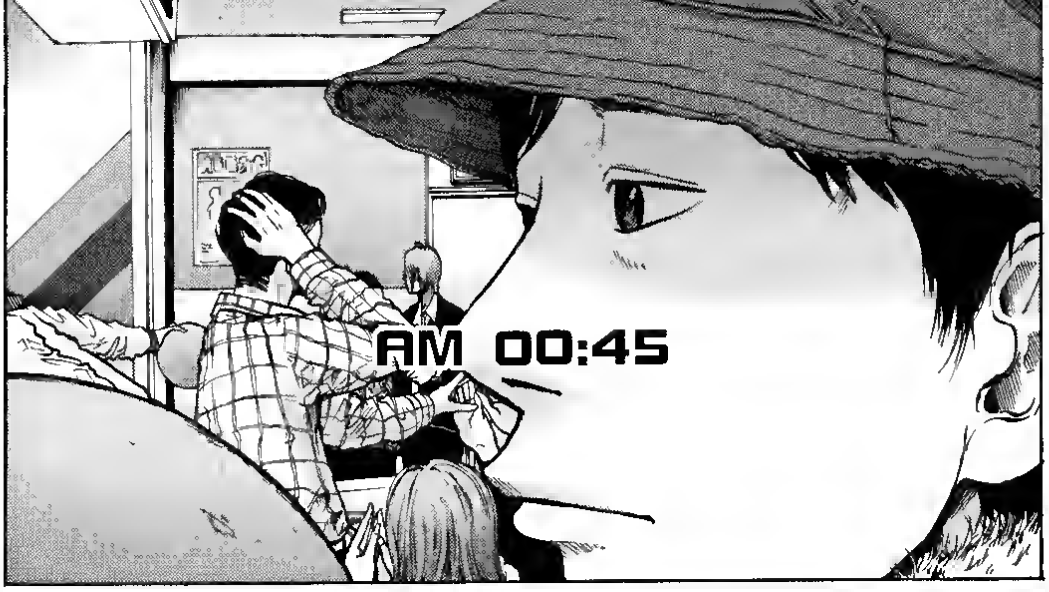

AM 00:00 02

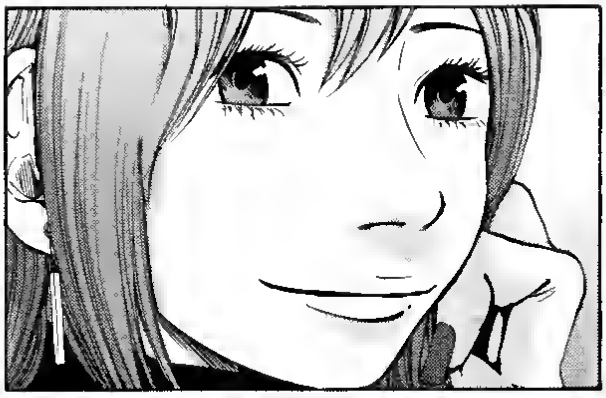


but now I haven't heard anything back from him and he hasn't shown up for our meeting.

Sure it's my own fault for saying yes,

and he asked me to act as an intermediary because they can't settle anything themselves.

So Iida's having trouble breaking up with his girlfriend

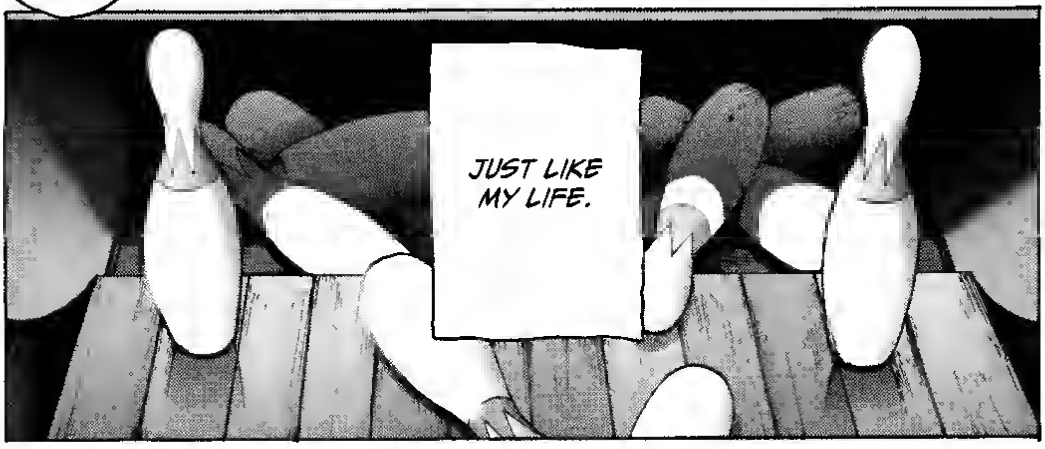


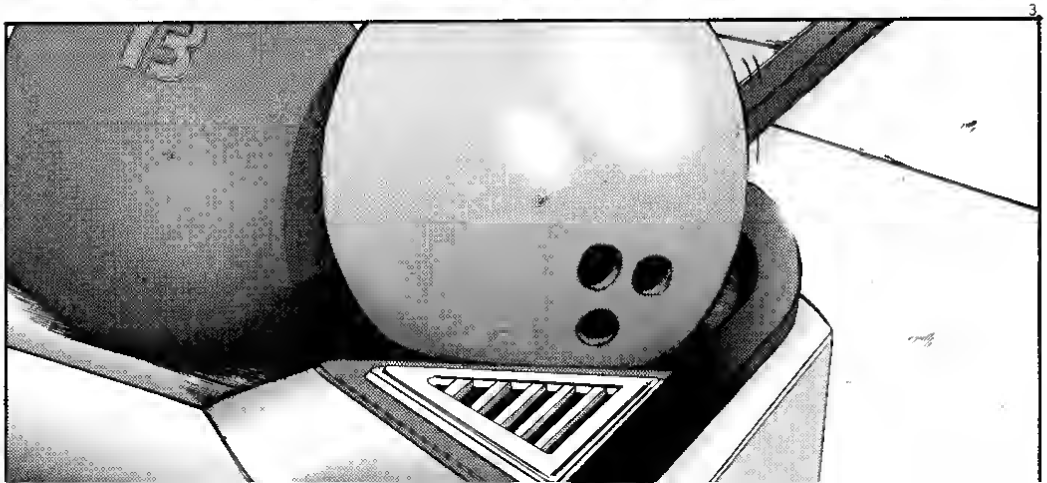
which makes things even more awkward.

is really my type,

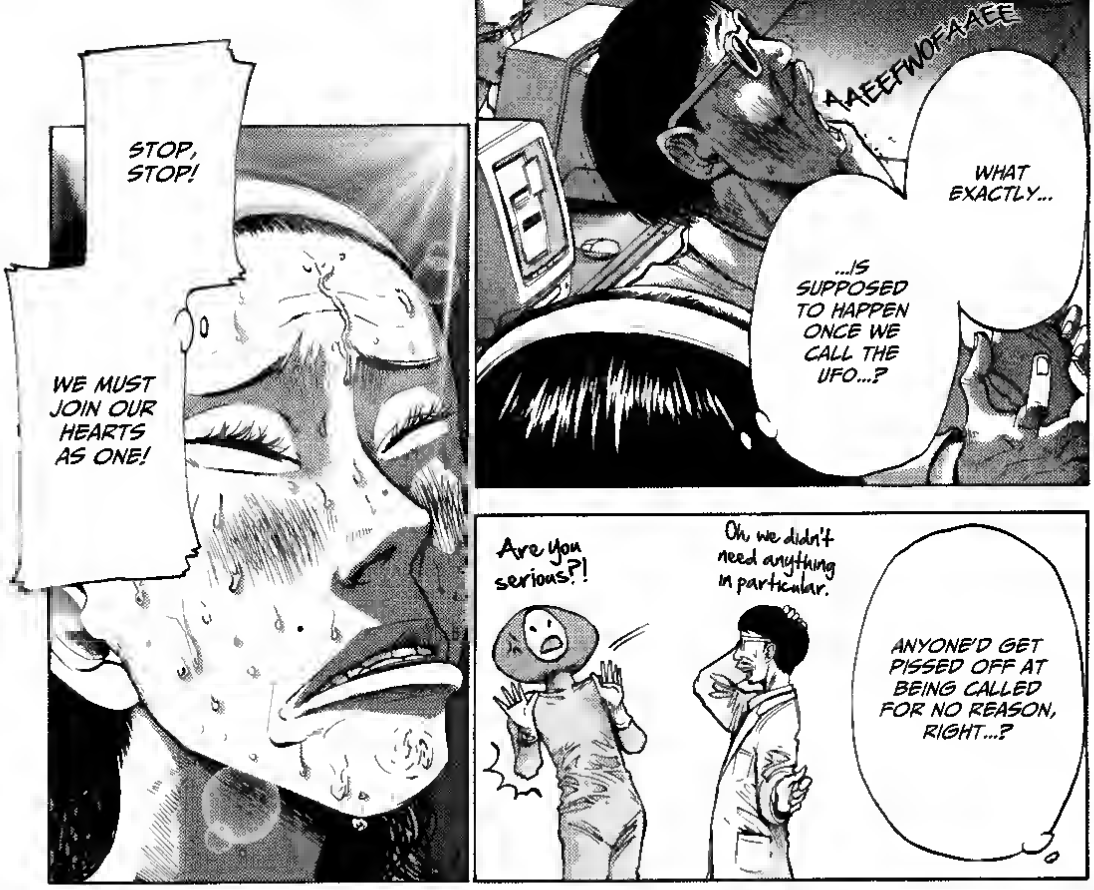
As if that weren't bad enough, his girlfriend, whom I have never met before,

BUT IF I DON'T FINISH THIS REPORT BEFORE THE MEETING FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, I'LL REALLY FUCK THINGS UP FOR MYSELF AT WORK.
SO CLOSE!
IT'D BE EASY ENOUGH TO SAY "WE SHOULD JUST FORGET ABOUT HIM AND GO GET A DRINK SOMEWHERE."


JUST LIKE MY LIFE.



AM 1:20
THEIR SHIP IS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON!
I'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM THEM!
EVERY-ONE!
COME ON! LOUDER!
CONCEN-TRATE!
NOW, EVERYONE! JOIN YOUR HEARTS AS ONE!
ベントレー
Breathe!
Breathe!
WAIT A SECOND ...
AND SEND OUT A CALL TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON!


AAEEFWOFAAEE
WHAT EXACTLY...
...IS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN ONCE WE CALL THE UFO...?
STOP, STOP!
WE MUST JOIN OUR HEARTS AS ONE!
Are you serious?!
Oh, we didn't need anything in particular.
ANYONE'D GET PISSED OFF AT BEING CALLED FOR NO REASON, RIGHT...?

...THIS LED TO AN ALIEN INVASION...!?
BUT WHAT IF...
THIS IS EARTH! THIS IS EARTH!
MR. UFO, WE AWAIT YOUR REPLY!
STOP! CONCEN-TRATE! CONCEN-TRATE!

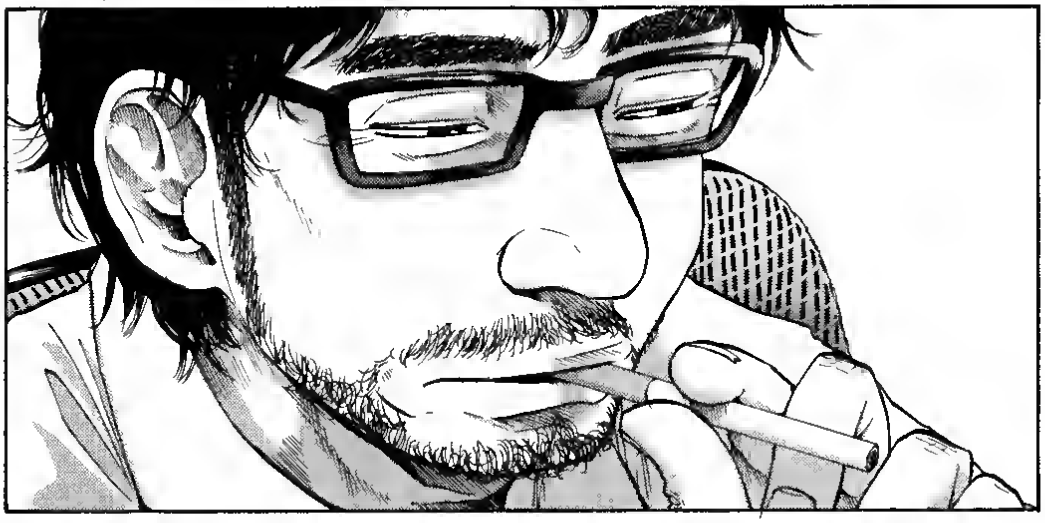
A junior high girl's going to commit suicide on camera!
She plans to stream the video live as she kills herself!
AM 2:26
HEY, WHAT IS THIS?
カタ カタ

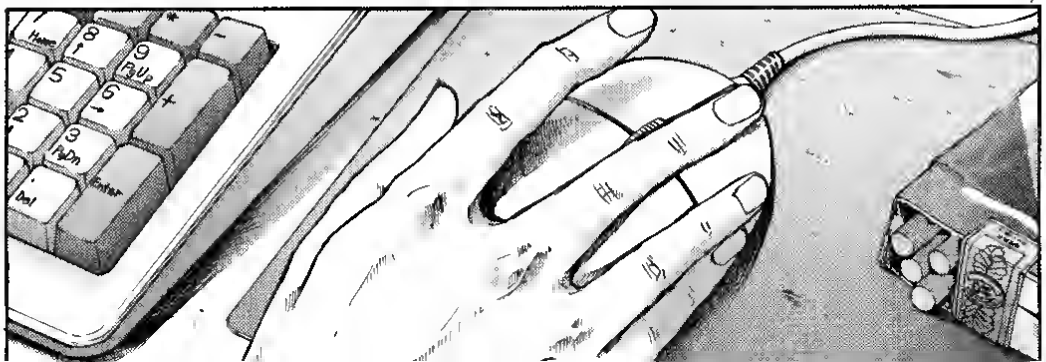
01/25/02:26
Nah, I just happened to come across it. Besides, you probably haven't written a single line, have you?
YOU SURE HAVE A LOT OF FREE TIME FOR AN EDITOR...

6

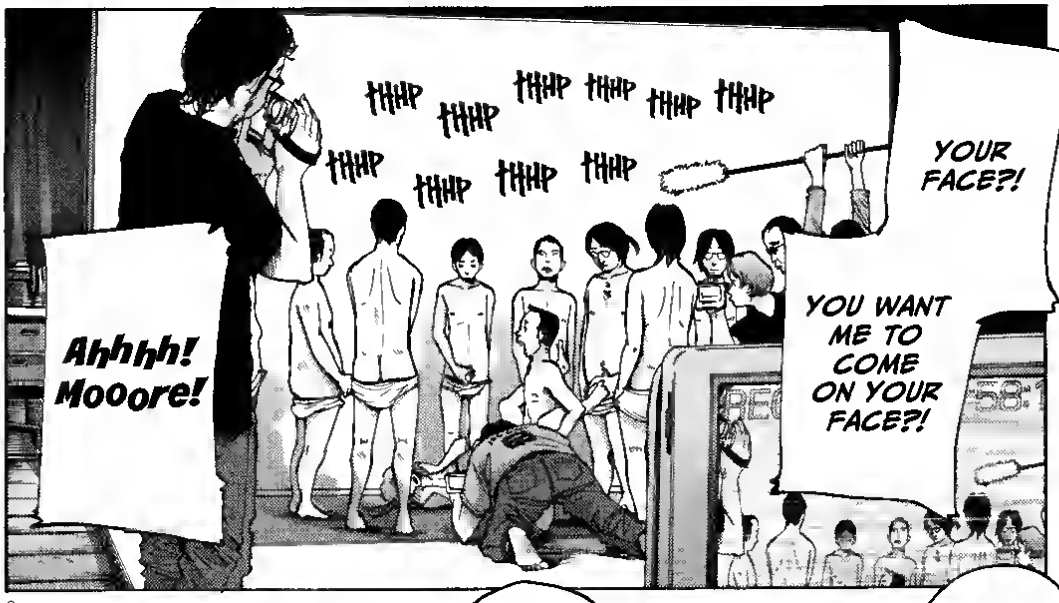
Come on, you may be a washed-up old geezer, but your books have helped millions.
NO WAY, WHAT CAN A WASHED-UP OLD GEEZER LIKE ME SAY?
HUH?
OH, YOU CAN EVEN COMMENT ON IT.
THAT'S JUST ASKING FOR FLAMES.
I DON'T GET KIDS TODAY.

And it's an editor's job to help authors when they're running dry.
Look, your daughter's in junior high, isn't she?
You could crank out a hit about a family that's falling apart, base it on your own experience...





Ahhh! More!
AM 2:29
HERE?!
YOU WANT ME TO CLICK HERE?!


THHP
Ahhhh! Mooore!
YOUR FACE?!
YOU WANT ME TO COME ON YOUR FACE?!

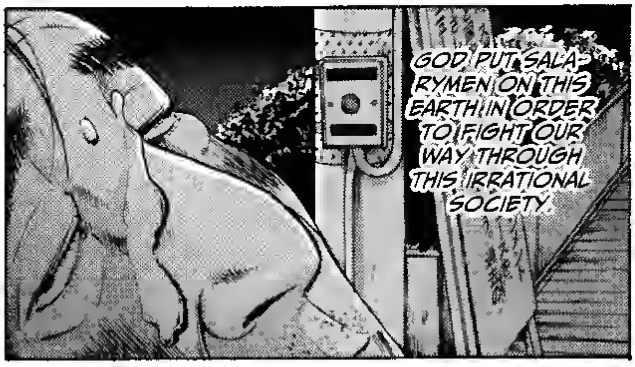
THHP
OH YEAH?
I'VE BEEN HAVING THIS WEIRD DREAM LATELY.
SO, MAYBE THIS IS AN AWKWARD TIME TO TALK, BUT...
YEAH, THAT'S KIND OF OUT OF THE BLUE.
A LITTLE GIRL WITHOUT A FACE LOOKS AT ME AND SAYS...

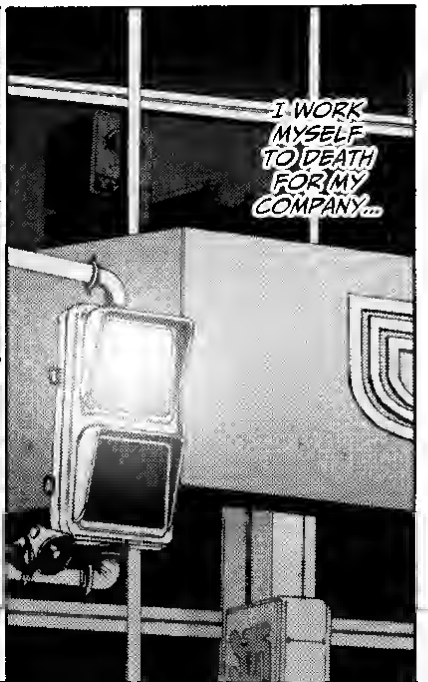
WELL, YOU'RE CERTAINLY JERKING OFF ANYWAY.
THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP
I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO BE BORN,
SO HOW CAN YOU KEEP SLACKING OFF YOUR WHOLE LIFE?
I NEVER HAVE A RESPONSE.
THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP THHP
PEOPLE...
UHN, UHN, UHN, UHN, UHN!

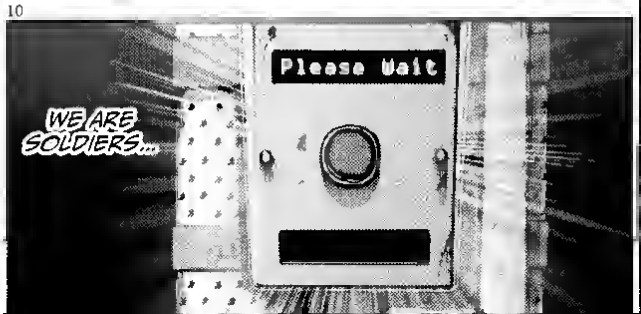
...ARE PATHETIC, AREN'T THEY?
Ohhh!

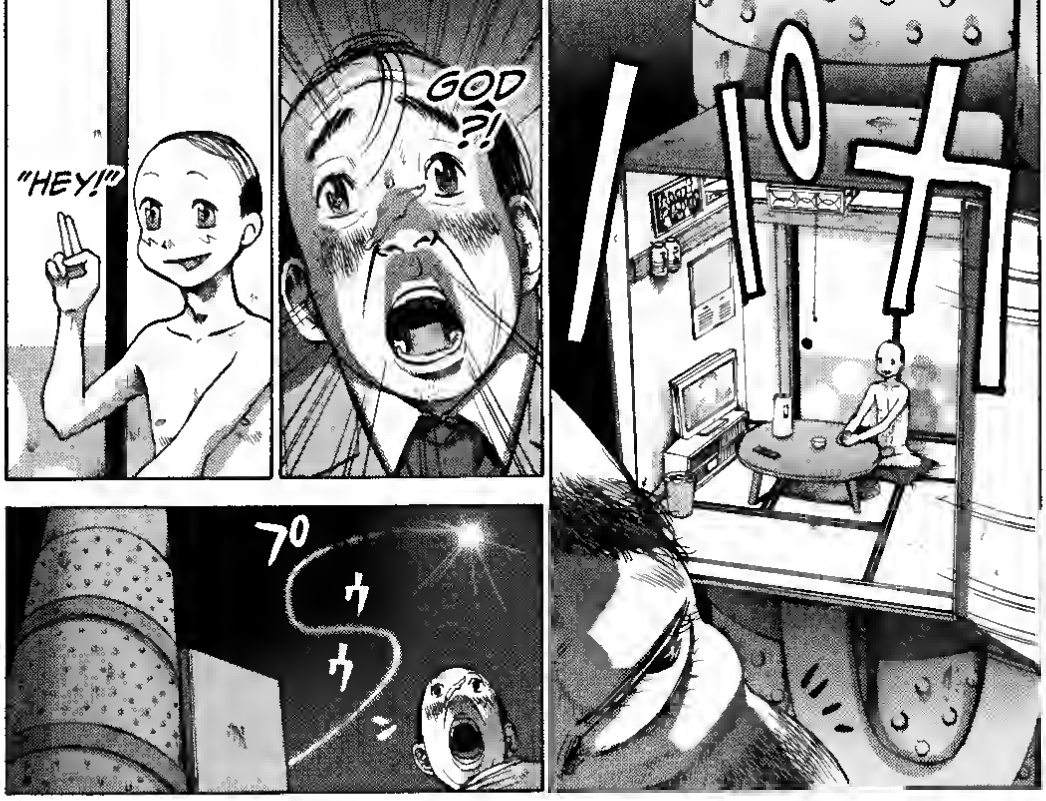
AM 3:02

SO I GOT A LITTLE TIPSY AND FELL ASLEEP OUT HERE, IS THAT ANY REASON FOR SOME KIDS TO SPIT ON ME...?
WHY? WHY...?


GOD PUT SALARYMEN ON THIS EARTH IN ORDER TO FIGHT OUR WAY THROUGH THIS IRRATIONAL SOCIETY.


I WORK MYSELF TO DEATH FOR MY COMPANY...

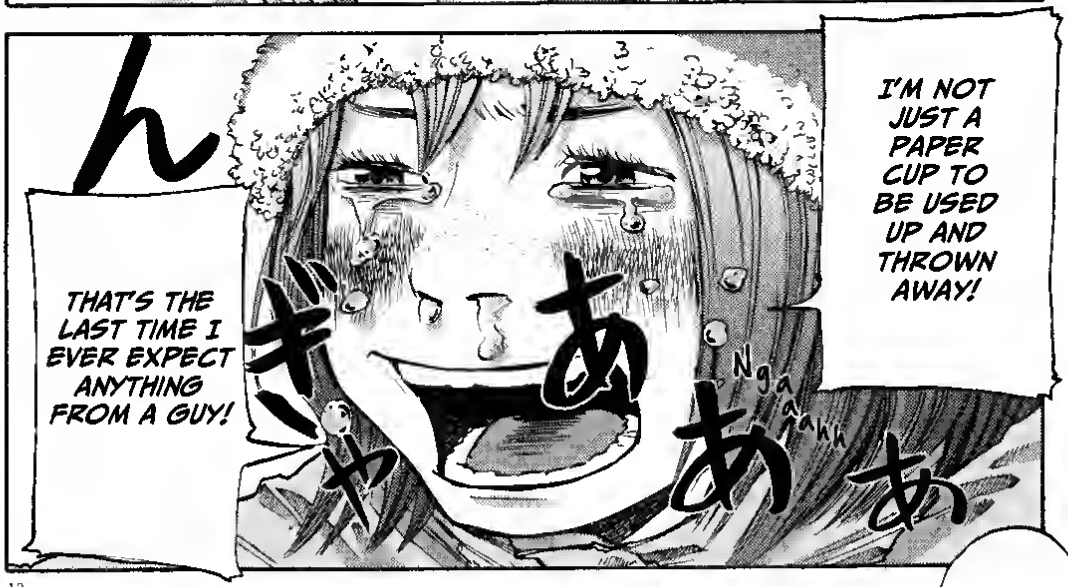

Please Wait
WE ARE SOLDIERS...


"HEY!"
GOD ?!
10年
ウウン

WHY DID YOU CREATE A WORLD LIKE THIS?!
HEY, GOD, WHY...

"JUST BECAUSE."

ドリーン!!
AM 3:54
ARGHHHH! I'VE HAD IT!


I'M NOT JUST A PAPER CUP TO BE USED UP AND THROWN AWAY!
THAT'S THE LAST TIME I EVER EXPECT ANYTHING FROM A GUY!
ん
ギャ
あ
Nga
あ
Aahh
あ

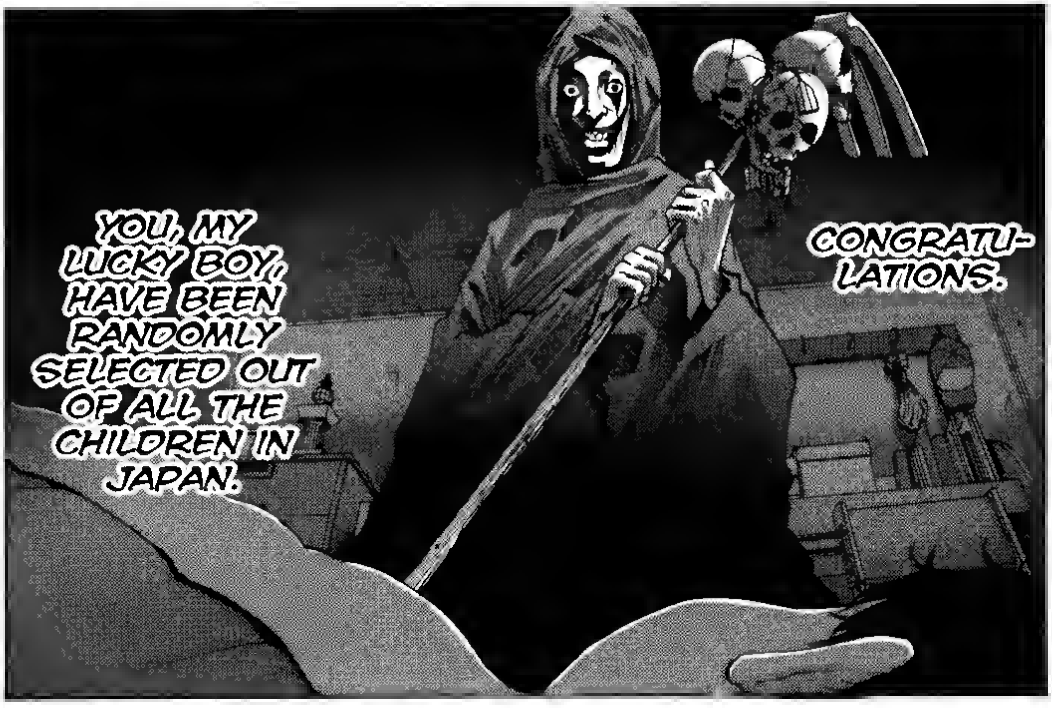
12

YEAH, YEAH, I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE.
THREE DAYS FROM NOW YOU'LL HAVE FALLEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE, JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO.
I'M GONNA SLEEP WITH EVERY GUY I CAN FIND AND GET A TON OF DISEASES...
...AND CAUSE ALL THE COCKS IN JAPAN TO ROT AND FALL OFF.
WOW, SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF WORK. HAHA!
HUH?
I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE...

I'M SERIOUS.
OH...
HERE COMES SOMEONE.
JUST WATCH, I'M GONNA DRAG THE FIRST GUY WHO COMES THROUGH THAT DOOR INTO A RESTROOM STALL AND BANG HIM!
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER!
おお
KEEP IT DOWN, WOULD YA?!

WELCOME.

AM 4:44

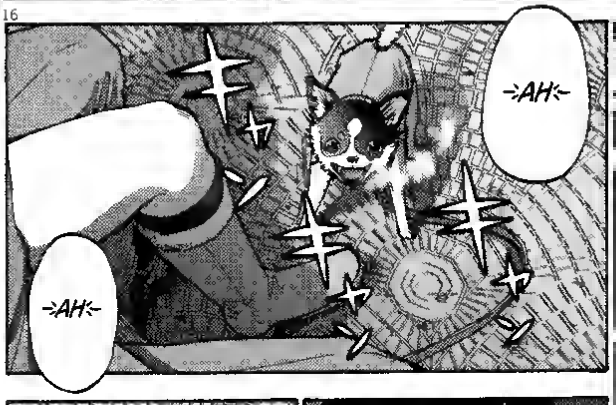

YOU, MY LUCKY BOY, HAVE BEEN RANDOMLY SELECTED OUT OF ALL THE CHILDREN IN JAPAN.
CONGRATULATIONS.

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION YOU WILL EVER MAKE IN YOUR LIFE.

IF YOU MAKE A BLOOD PACT WITH ME...
THE WORLD IS RULED BY THOSE WHO HAVE SOLD THEIR SOULS TO THE DEVIL.
...TO CONTROL EVERY-ONE?
DO YOU WANT THE POWER...
...CAN BE YOURS!
...THAT POWER...

I KNOW YOU WILL USE IT WISELY.

16



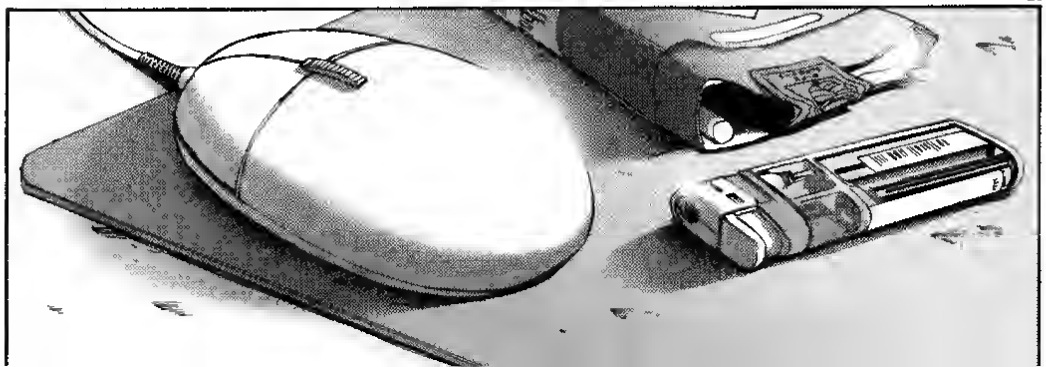
AM 5:45
MA'AM!

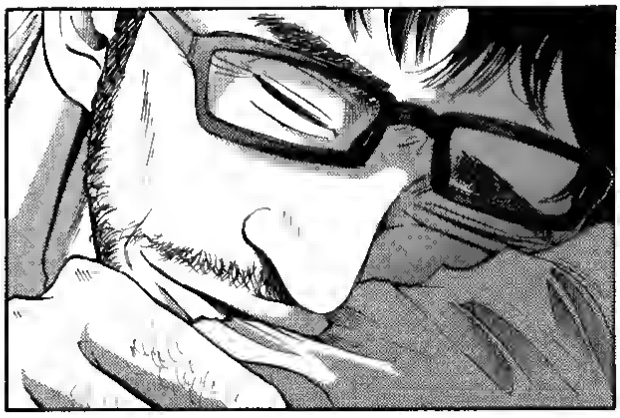
MA'AM!

CONGRATU-
LATIONS!

3255 GRAMS
YOU HAVE A HEALTHY BABY BOY.

HE'S SO TINY.





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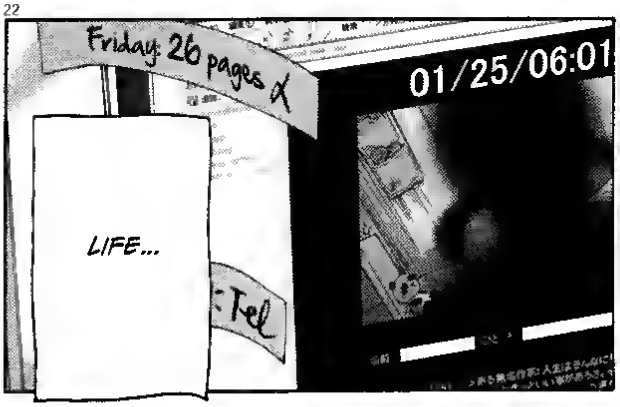
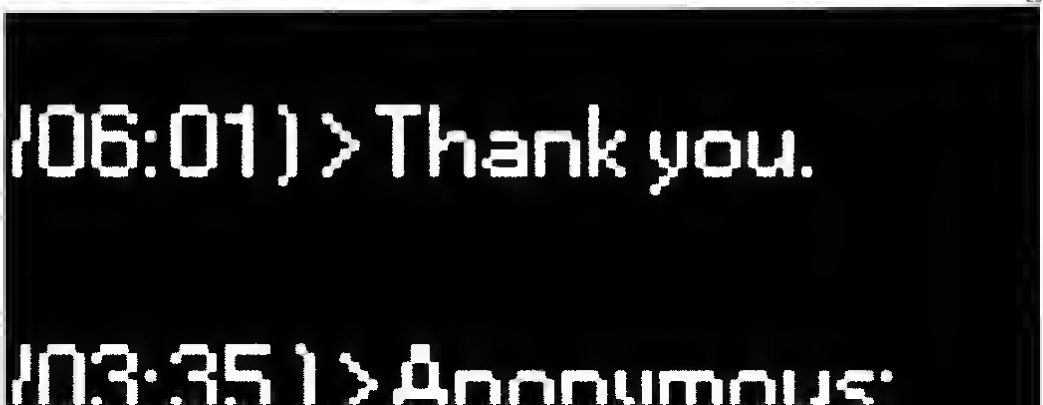

Friday 26 pages
01/25/06:01
LIFE...

AND MAYBE THAT'S NO CONSOLATION...

LIFE ISN'T SO BAD.
IF YOU KEEP LIVING, YOU WILL SOMEDAY FIND SOMETHING GOOD.

I'M SURE HAPPINESS AND KINDNESS ARE HIDING SOMEWHERE RIGHT NEARBY.
BECAUSE I THINK THERE ARE PLENTY OF BAD THINGS IN THE WORLD.
BUT...

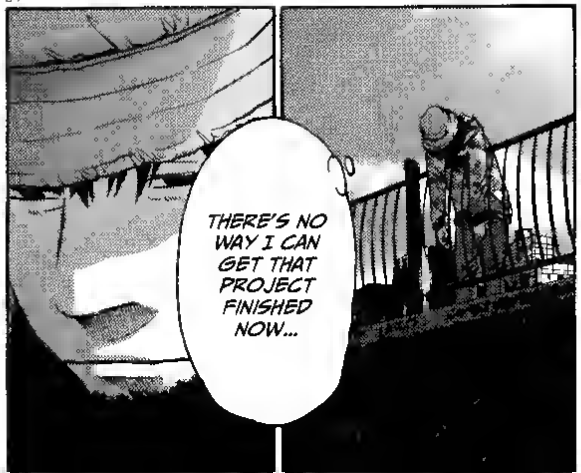
01/25/06:05
IT'S UP TO YOU WHAT YOU'LL TAKE FROM THAT.
IF NOTHING ELSE, MORNING COMES THE SAME FOR EVERYONE.
名前
送信
(2007/01/25/06:01)>Thank you.


/06:01)>Thank you.
/03:35)>Anonymous:

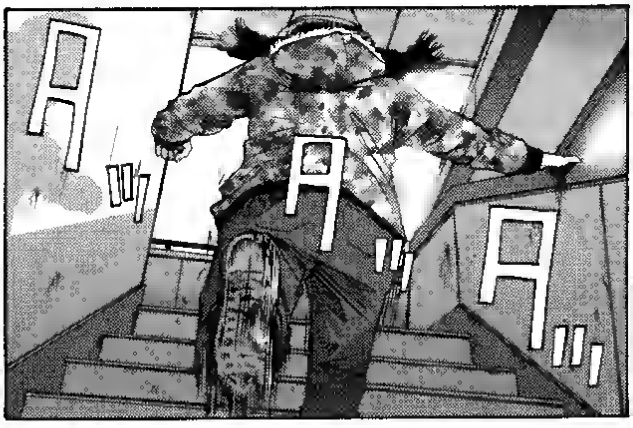
When the first train started running and she was just about to leave, Iida's girlfriend said...

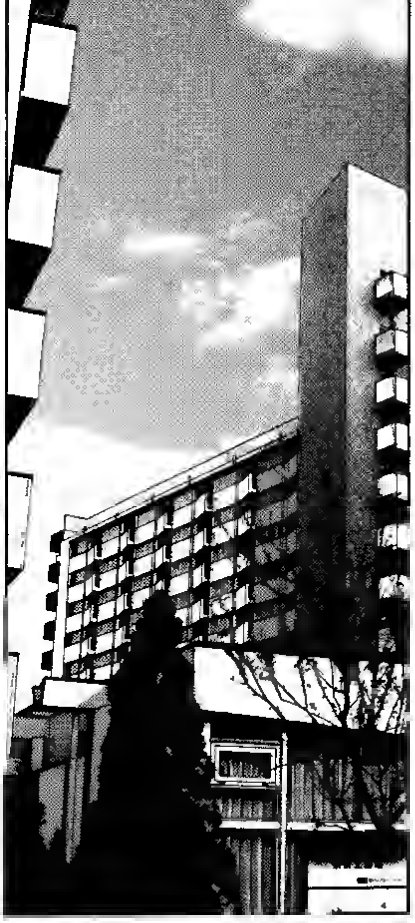
and we spent the night at the bowling alley talking about nothing.

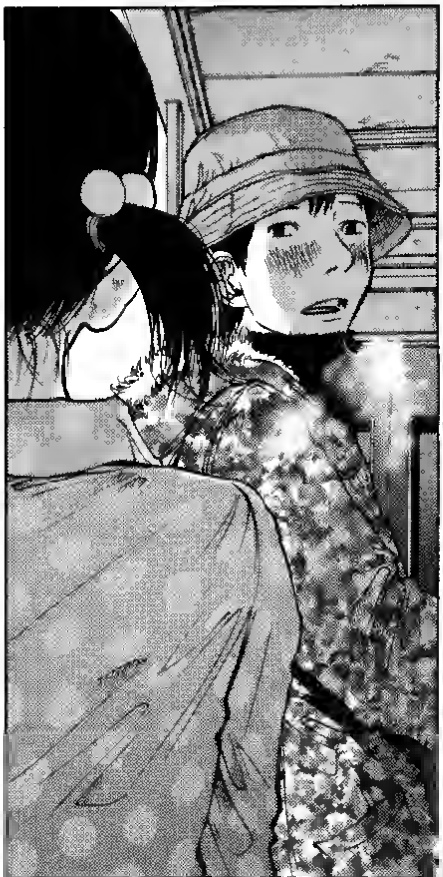
Iida never did get back to me,

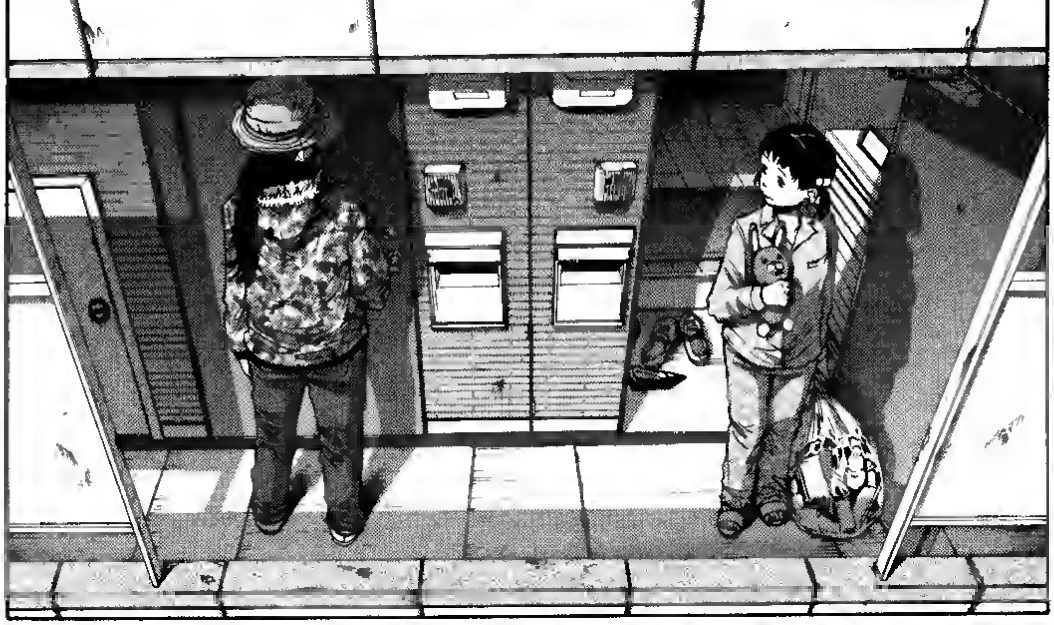


SIGN: ELEVATOR OUT OF ORDER









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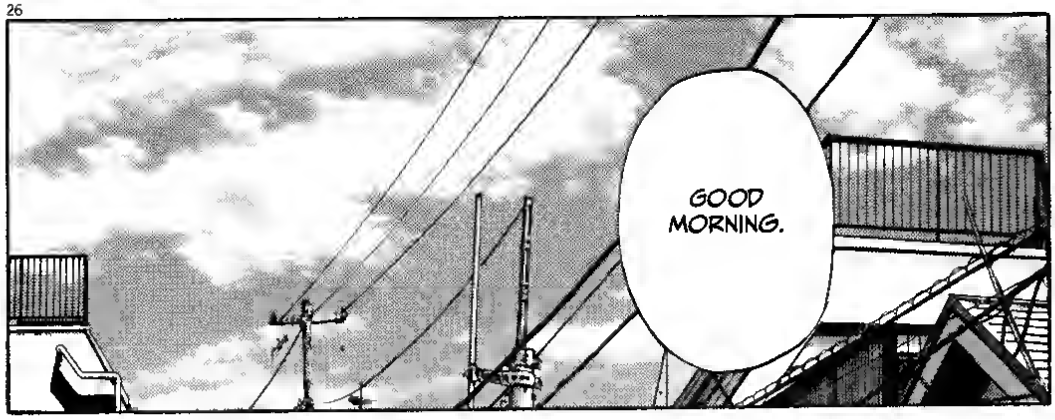
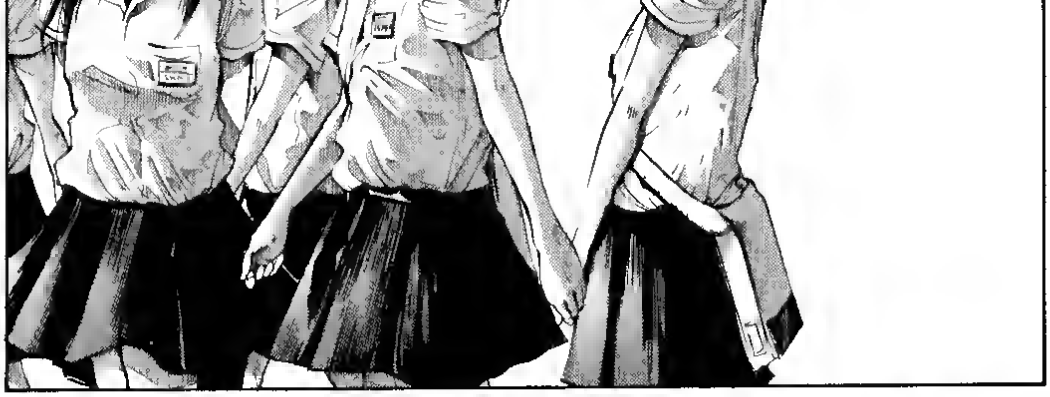
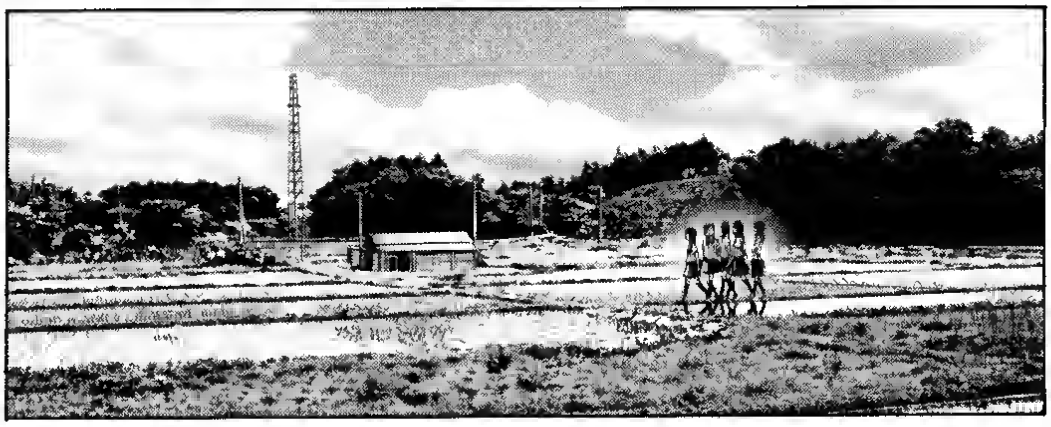
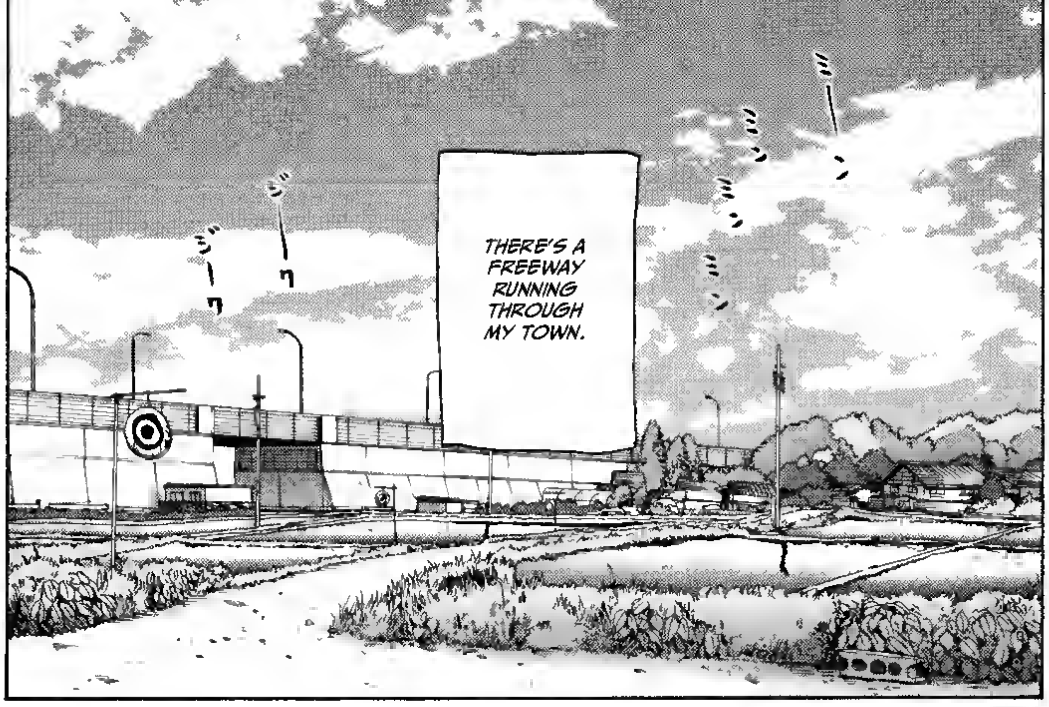


Alfalfa

First published in *Sunday GX*, Issue of July 2005 (July 19, 2005).







My family built a huge house with the money we got from selling our land when they put it in.

But that was back when my grandpa was young, and he's dead now

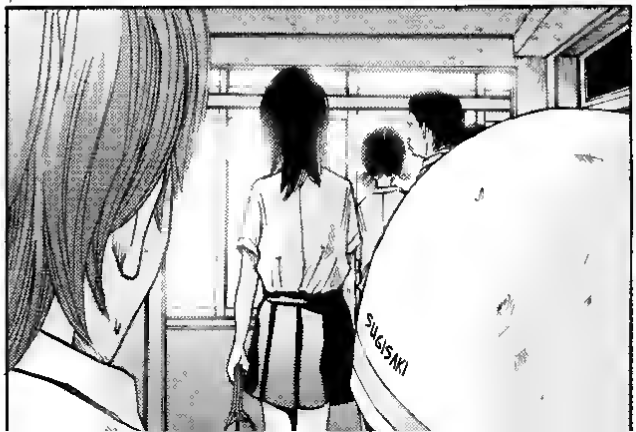
and my mom and I just rattle around in this huge house all by ourselves.

2

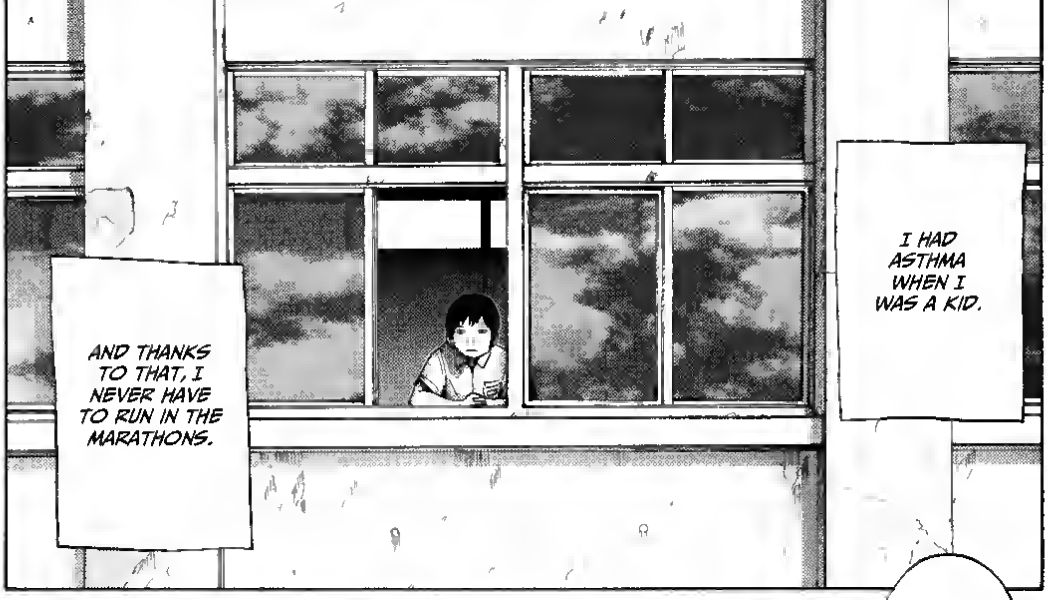
SEE YOU LATER
WHAT TIME WILL YOU BE HOME TONIGHT?
UH... I DON'T KNOW.
I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AFTER SCHOOL, SO I MIGHT BE LATE.

I HAVE A MEETING TONIGHT, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO EAT DINNER ALONE.
OH, AND...
I SAW HONDA'S HAIR IS BROWN. WHAT HAPPENED?
SEE YA.
THESE MEETINGS MY MOM GOES TO ARE SOME SORT OF CULT THAT ALL THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD LADIES ARE INTO.
IT MEETS TWICE A MONTH.
SUPPOSEDLY THE FOUNDER IS THE PRINCIPAL OF MY OLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BUT WHY AM I EVEN TALKING ABOUT THIS?
HEY, SUGISAKI.
HONDA... YOUR HAIR'S GETTING LIGHTER BY THE DAY.
THE TEACHERS ARE GONNA GET PISSED PRETTY SOON.
SO? LET 'EM.

4



SUGISAKI
HONDA,
YOU LIKE HER, DON'T YOU?
SHE TOTALLY IGNORED ME.
NO WAY, DON'T BE STUPID!
SO, WHAT?
DO YOU WANNA BANG HER?
NO WAY, DON'T BE STUPID!


I HAD ASTHMA WHEN I WAS A KID.
AND THANKS TO THAT, I NEVER HAVE TO RUN IN THE MARATHONS.

YOU'RE JUST WATCHING, TOO, HUH?

THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE AN INCURABLE ILLNESS.

YOU ALWAYS SIT OUT P.E., TOO, DON'T YOU?

KIDDING.

5th period:
Marathon
YOU REMEMBER LAST YEAR THE GIRLS' P.E. UNIFORMS SWITCHED FROM BLOOMERS TO SHORTS, RIGHT?
WELL, YOU CAN SEE OUR UNDERWEAR WHEN WE SIT IN THOSE.
AND THAT PERV'S ALWAYS LOOKING UP OUR SHORTS.
OH, MR. BABA?

IS THAT WHY...
...YOU ALWAYS SKIP P.E.?
Hey!
YEAH.
HE JUST PISSES ME OFF.
Faster, boys!

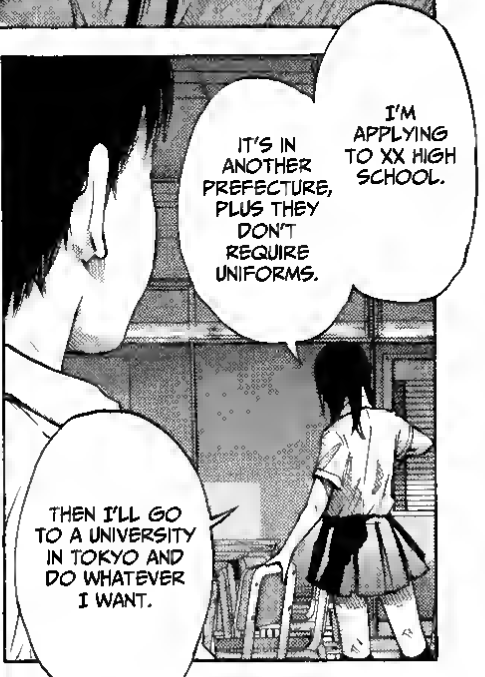
HE'S A TOTAL SKEEZE, BUT JUST BECAUSE HE'S A TEACHER...
...HE GETS TO BOSS US AROUND. IT'S NOT RIGHT.
SO ANYWAY, I SKIP P.E. AS A FORM OF PROTEST.
YOUR GRADES'LL DROP IF YOU MISS TOO MANY DAYS.
I'VE GOT THAT UNDER CONTROL.

AHHHH!
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF THIS DINKY TOWN.

JUST LOOKING AT THE FREEWAY BRIDGE...
...MAKES ME ANTSY.
IT'S LIKE, THAT BRIDGE GOES ALL THE WAY TO TOKYO,
SO WHAT AM I STILL DOING HERE?

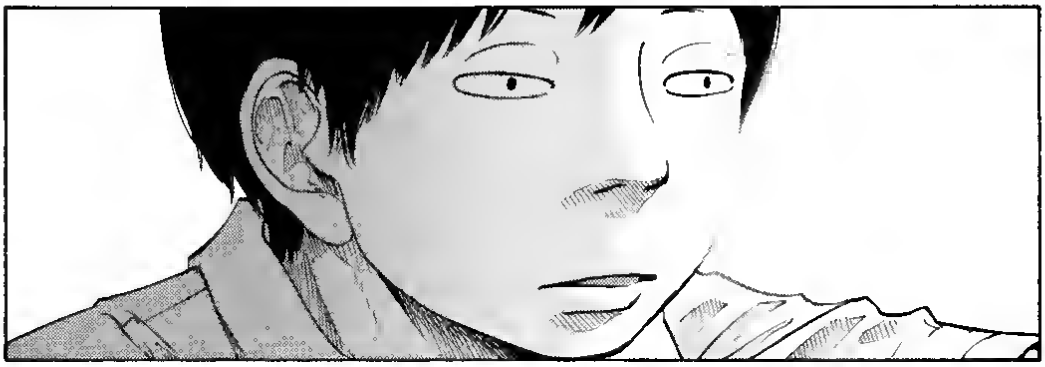
8

WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I... CAN'T LEAVE MY MOM ALONE,
SO I'LL JUST GO TO THE HIGH SCHOOL HERE.


I'M APPLYING TO XX HIGH SCHOOL.
IT'S IN ANOTHER PREFECTURE, PLUS THEY DON'T REQUIRE UNIFORMS.
THEN I'LL GO TO A UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO AND DO WHATEVER I WANT.

YOU A MAMA'S BOY?
NAH.

IS THERE ANYONE YOU LIKE?
NO.
I'VE NEVER HAD A CRUSH ON ANYONE BEFORE.
YOU'RE ALWAYS HANGING AROUND WITH HONDA...
ARE YOU GAY?
NO WAY!

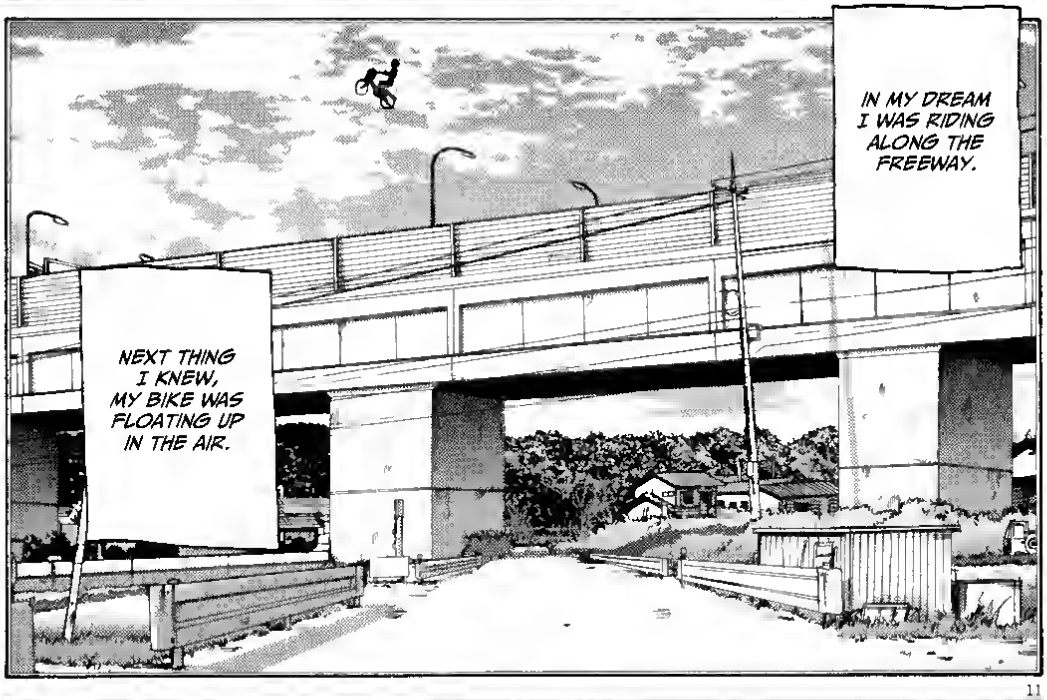


3-3
OZAWA

One, two!
One, two!
One, two!
BUT I HATE MYSELF FOR SAYING THAT EVEN MORE.
IT'S SO BORING AND RESTRICTIVE HERE. I *HATE* IT.

I had a dream.

That night



and for a split-second it felt like I figured out the meaning of life.

and then my vision went white

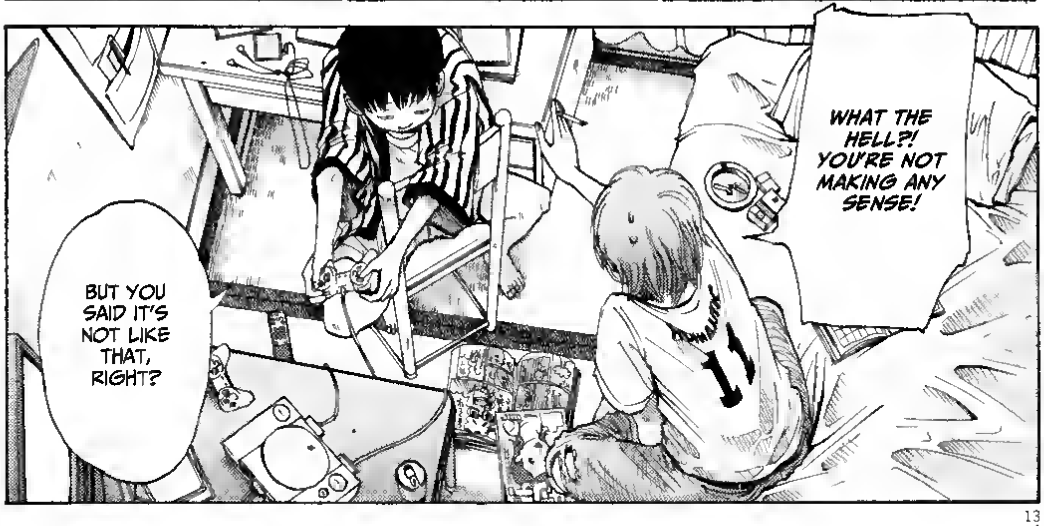
I just kept pedaling out into space,

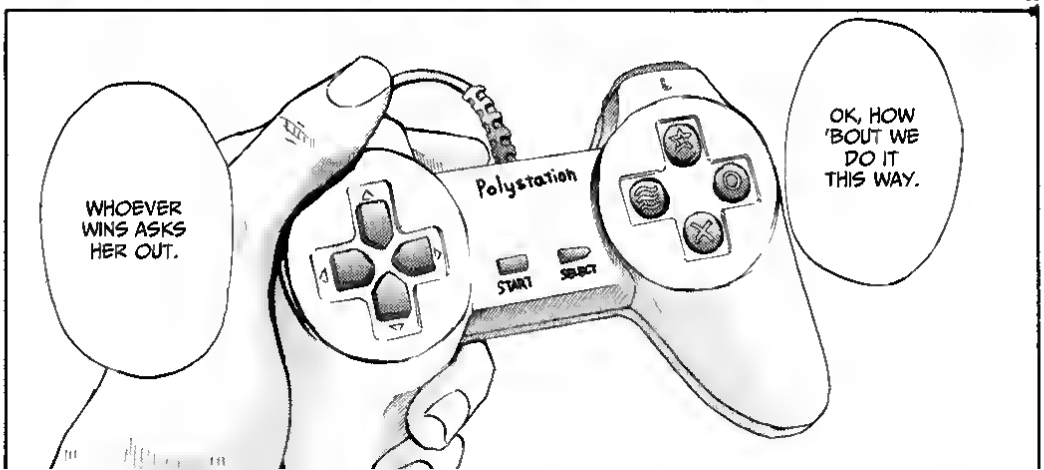
Hey, it's me, Honda.
HELLO?
RRRRRR!
MY BROTHER BUILT IT.
LOOKS REALLY HARD TO RIDE.
WHAT'S WITH THE SCOOTER?
SO WHAT? I'M NOT HURTING ANYONE.
YOU TURNING INTO SOME SORT OF GEEK?
LOOK AT YOU, STILL PLAYING VIDEO GAMES IN 9TH GRADE...
YOU TURNING INTO SOME SORT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENT?
ROMANTIC
11
I THINK HAPPINESS IS HAVING SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN.

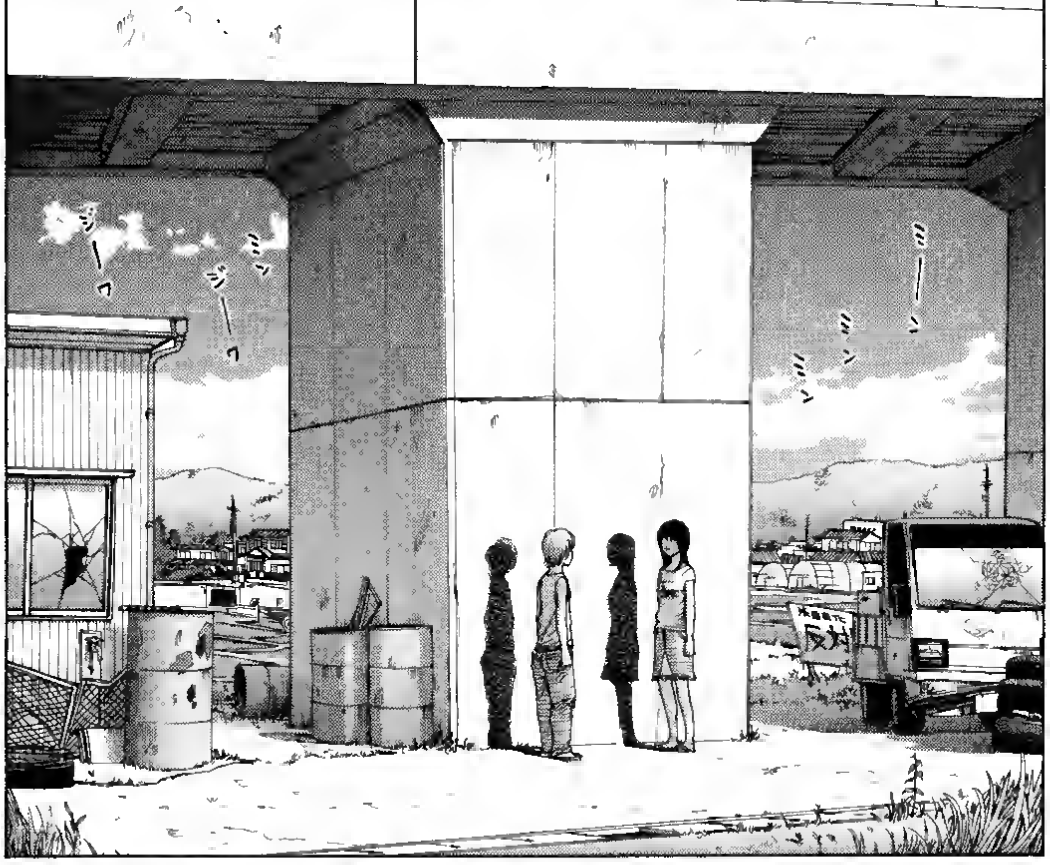
12

MAG: ZOKUSHA MAGAZINE
ZOKUSHA IS A GENERIC TERM FOR *BOSOZOKU* (GANG) STYLE CARS AND BIKES

I TOLD YOU, STUPID, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL OZAWA YOU LIKE HER?
SO YOU DON'T MIND IF I ASK HER OUT?
WHETHER IT'S BIKES OR PORN OR MONEY OR A CULT.
OR A GIRL.
OR FREEDOM.


BUT YOU SAID IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
WHAT THE HELL?! YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!


WHOEVER WINS ASKS HER OUT.
OK, HOW 'BOUT WE DO IT THIS WAY.
Polystation
START
SELECT


ジーワ
ミンジーワ
ミーン
ミンミン

ミーン
14
HOW'D IT GO?
SERIOUSLY ?!
ずびしっ
fwip
IT'S OVER, SUGISAKI.

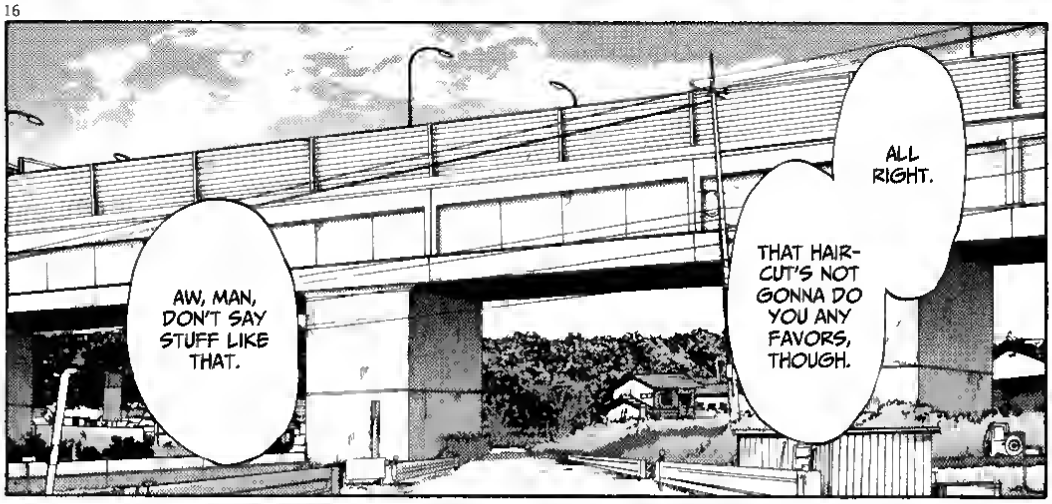
AND THEN SHE SAID ...
...SHE HATED YOU EVEN MORE FOR HIDING.
JUST KIDDING!
NAH...
SERIOUSLY ?
SHE SAID SHE HATES GUYS LIKE ME.

FOR NOW I'LL JUST BELIEVE IN OUR FRIENDSHIP.
EH.
WHATEVER.

A FEW WEEKS LATER OUR P.E. TEACHER MR. BABA GOT ARRESTED.

(At least I hope so.)
she just followed that freeway to freedom.
But really I think
AT THE SAME TIME, OZAWA STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL.
THERE WERE RUMORS THAT SHE'D ELOPED WITH MR. BABA OR THAT SHE'D GOTTEN SICK AND DIED.
HEY.
WANNA GO TO SHIBUYA NEXT WEEK?
SURE.
BUT HOW COME?
TO HIT ON GIRLS, DUH!
WE'VE GOTTA BECOME MEN!

16

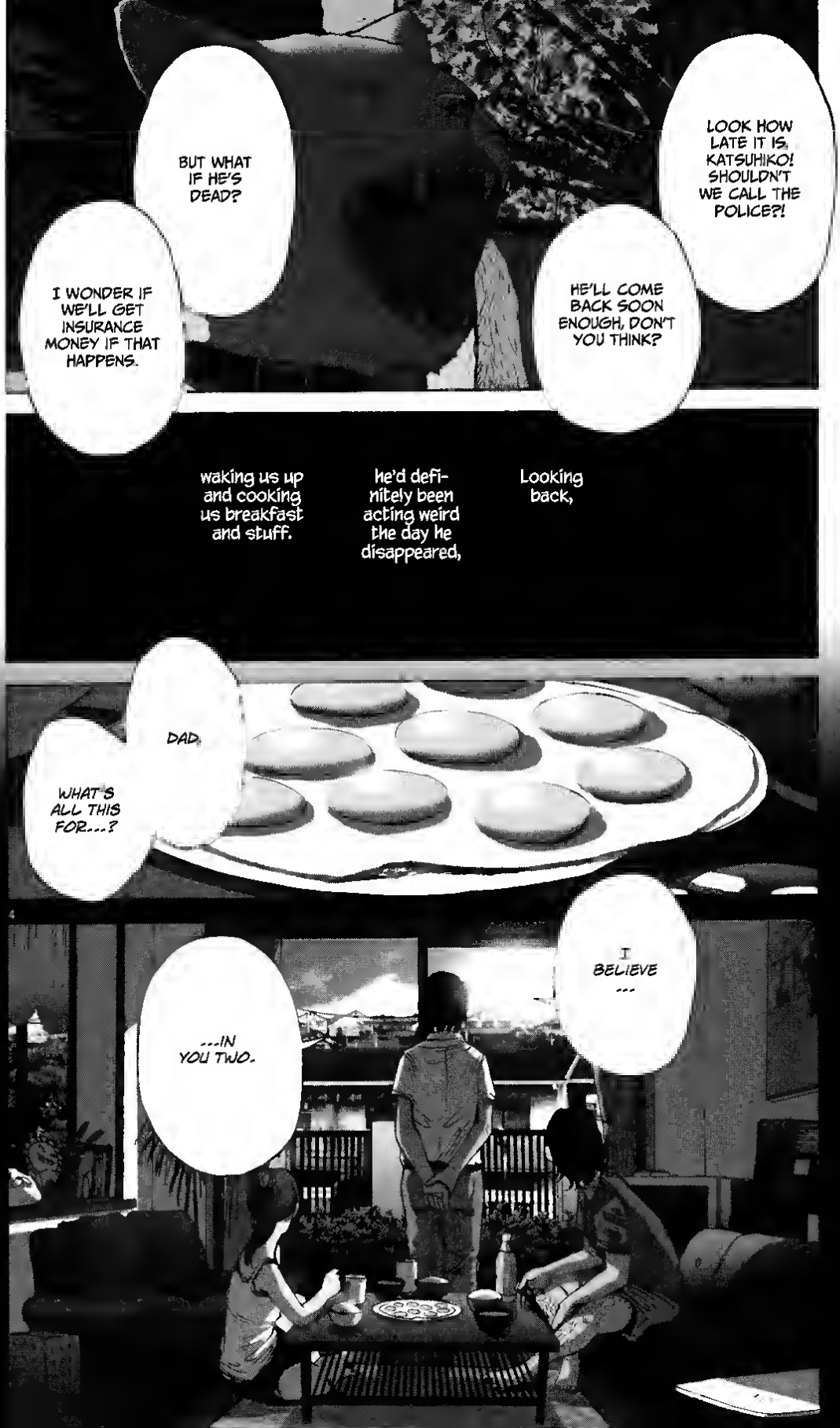


Alfalfa -END-

Sunday, 6:30 PM

First published in *Big Comic Spirits*, Issue #36/37 (August 21/28), #38 (September 4), #39 (September 11, 2006).

Sir.
I'm sorry, but I couldn't get you on your cell phone...
...'LO, ESONO RESIDENCE.
You've always worked so hard for the company!
WHO IS IT?
HUH?
UH...
Huh?
UH, ISN'T MY DAD ON A BUSINESS TRIP?
Why did you have to get laid off?!
It's just not right...
My dad went missing.

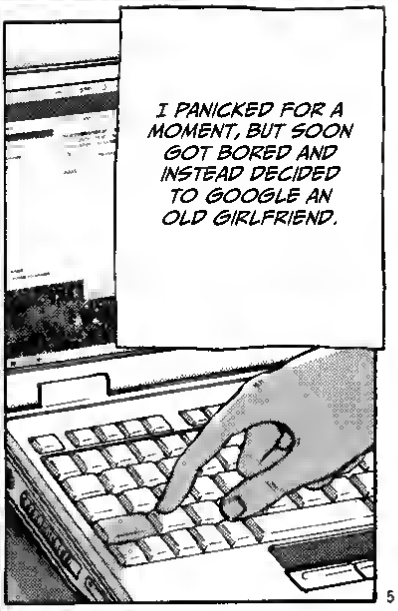

LOOK HOW LATE IT IS, KATSUHIKO! SHOULDN'T WE CALL THE POLICE?!
HE'LL COME BACK SOON ENOUGH, DON'T YOU THINK?
BUT WHAT IF HE'S DEAD?
I WONDER IF WE'LL GET INSURANCE MONEY IF THAT HAPPENS.
Looking back,
he'd definitely been acting weird the day he disappeared,
waking us up and cooking us breakfast and stuff.
DAD.
WHAT'S ALL THIS FOR...?
I BELIEVE ...
...IN YOU TWO.

All I'm worried about is money for tuition.

but, well... my dad's life is his own.

The words he mumbled to himself stuck with me,

You can keep slacking off if you want.
GIMME A BREAK, MAN!
ボリボリボリ
ボリボリ
AROUND NOON I GOT A CALL FROM A FRIEND SAYING HE'D SUBMITTED HIS RESUME SOMEWHERE ONLINE.

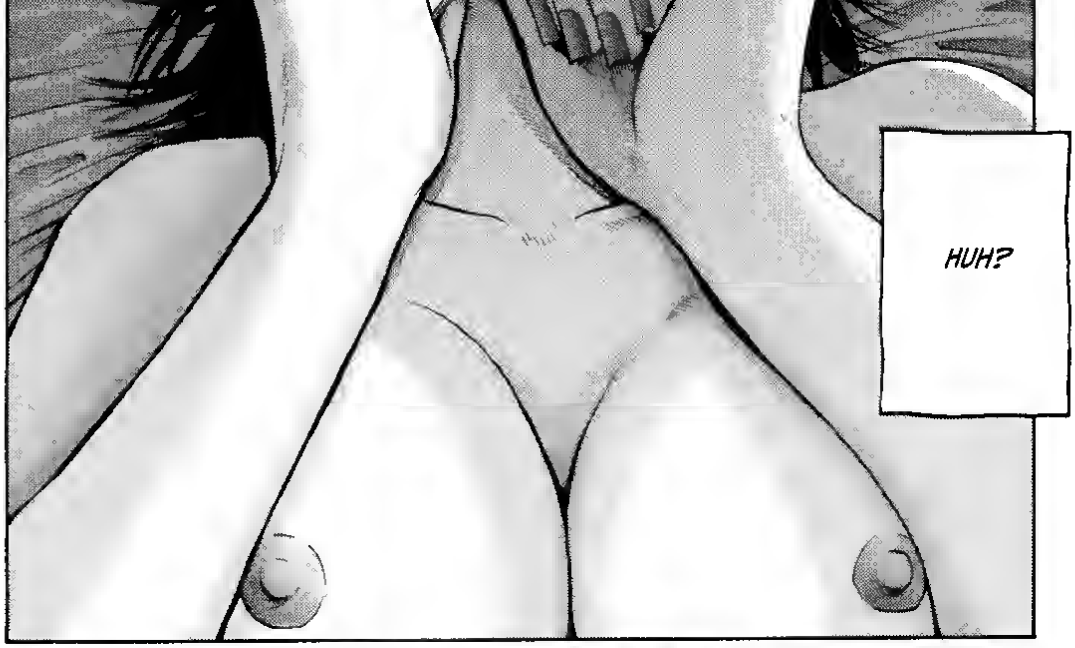


1
SUMMER MEMORIES

I HADN'T SEEN KODA IN A YEAR AND A HALF. SHE LOOKED A LITTLE MORE GROWN-UP, BUT MOST OF ALL SHE WAS DAZZLING.
WHENEVER I'M BACK IN TOKYO, I'M ALWAYS SURPRISED BY HOW MANY PEOPLE THERE ARE.
6
YOU SURE YOU'RE OK LEAVING YOUR KID AT HOME?
SOMETIMES I JUST NEED A BREAK!
NAKASHIMA COULDN'T MAKE IT?
HE SAID HIS NATION-WIDE TOUR GOT EXTENDED AT THE LAST MINUTE.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
BEATS ME.
WE ALL WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, DIDN'T WE?
GOING OUT FOR A DRINK LIKE THIS REALLY MAKES YOU FEEL GROWN UP, HUH?
SURE DOES.

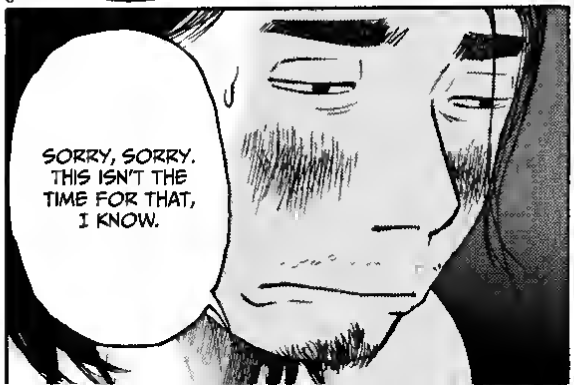
SO? ARE YOU... STILL WRITING THAT SCRIPT?
NAH... I JUST HANG OUT AROUND HERE WITH MY FRIENDS FROM COLLEGE, DOING NOTHING.
YOU STILL LIVE AT HOME, RIGHT?
YEAH. MY DAD JUST WENT MISSING, THOUGH. IS THAT CRAZY OR WHAT?
SERIOUSLY? THAT MUST BE TOUGH.
Virgin!

SHE'S... MARRIED.
THAT'S KINDA HOT.
REALLY?
ザアアアア


HUH?

HMM?

OHHH?
ESONO,
YOU'VE GOTTEN A LOT BETTER AT THIS.
BACK WHEN WE WERE DATING, YOU COULDN'T EVEN KISS WELL.


SORRY, SORRY. THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT, I KNOW.

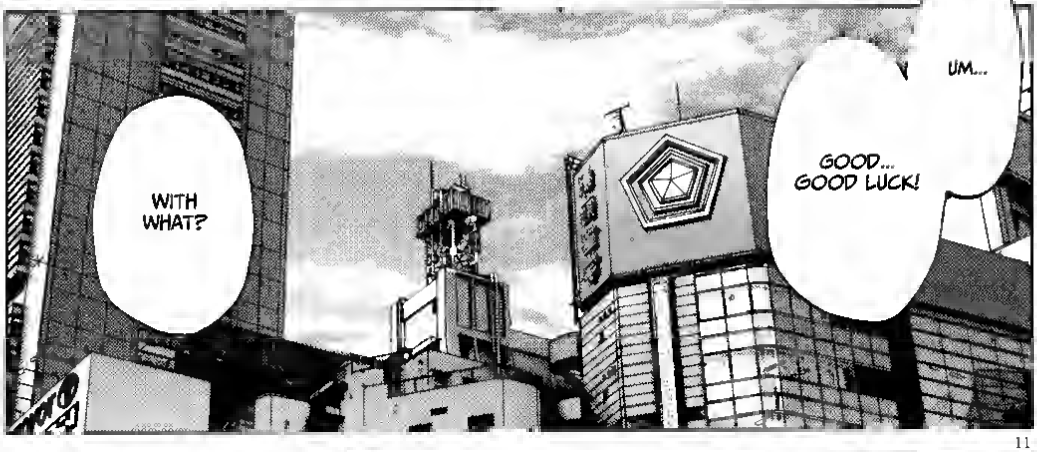
HOTEL
HEY,
DO YOU REMEMBER WHY WE BROKE UP?
HUH?
WE JUST SORT OF DRIFTED APART, DIDN'T WE?
SORRY, I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER...
WELL...
SOMETHING LIKE THAT, ANYWAY...
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
I CAN'T GET PREGNANT ANYWAY.

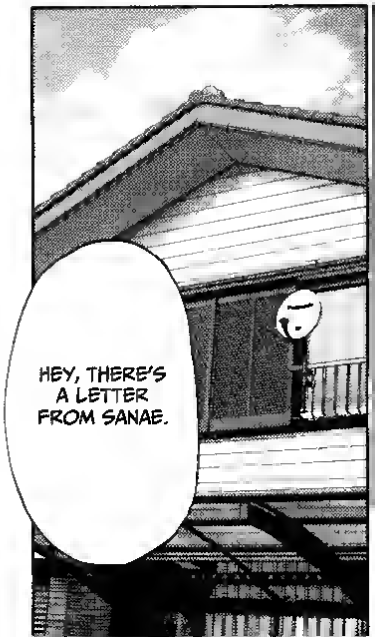
IT'S JUST...
...THE FANTASIES OF A DEPRESSED HOUSEWIFE.
THAT BLOG IS NOTHING BUT LIES.

I'M SUPPOSED TO SIGN THE DIVORCE PAPERS SOMETIME THIS MONTH.
MY HUSBAND AND I HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING ALONG.
EVER SINCE I FOUND OUT I CAN'T HAVE KIDS,

What...?
...THE SORT OF THING YOU SAY WHEN YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED.
THAT'S...

ARE YOU SERIOUS?





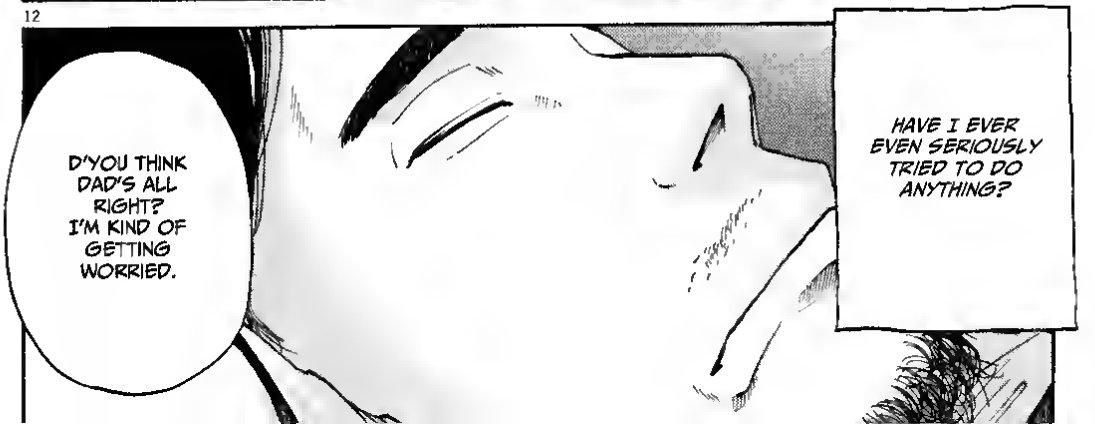
But the truth is, it was too much for me.

if I grabbed her and said, "Let's start over."

Maybe it would be all cool and dramatic

ANYWAY, I'M GOING TO BED. I'M TIRED.
EH, LEAVE THAT IDIOT ALONE.
SHE'S ALWAYS OFF SOMEWHERE HAVING FUN.
DOESN'T SHE KNOW WE'RE HAVING A FAMILY CRISIS RIGHT NOW?
I can barely even take care of myself.
I don't have time for anyone else.

OH, AM I...
I MIGHT NOT BE HOME TILL LATE, SO FEED JUNIOR, OK?
...LYING TO MYSELF?


D'YOU THINK DAD'S ALL RIGHT? I'M KIND OF GETTING WORRIED.
HAVE I EVER EVEN SERIOUSLY TRIED TO DO ANYTHING?

We made plans to get together with Koda again in three days.

I got a call from Nakashima while I was sleeping.

HUH? WHERE'S KODA?
SHE SAID SHE'LL BE HERE SOON.
HEY, NAKASHIMA, LONG TIME NO SEE!
I SEE YOU'RE FAT AS ALWAYS.
HEY, ESONO, YOU CUT YOUR HAIR?
OH HEY, WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT ABOUT A NATION-WIDE TOUR?

OH, THAT.
I'VE BEEN FILMING AMATEUR PORN ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.
SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE INTO THAT SHIT?
HEY, I'M JUST THE CAMERAMAN.
14
ANYWAY, THE LAST GIRL WE WERE SUPPOSED TO FILM GOT COLD FEET.
IT REALLY THREW A WRENCH IN THE WORKS.
DAMN.
HAHA...
SO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GIRL?
WE LEFT HER UP IN THE MOUNTAINS TO GIVE HER A LITTLE SCARE.

I'M...
...GONNA GO LOOK FOR KODA.
半蔵門線
Hanzōmon Line
渋谷駅
Shibuya St
-SIGH-
YOU'RE THINKING I'M A TOTAL ASSHOLE, AREN'T YOU?
NAH...

Really, Nakashima?

What really pisses me off...
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
ギャはは
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter

IT'S YOUR FAULT I TURNED OUT LIKE THIS. IF YOU'D JUST WRITE THAT SCRIPT...

...IS HOW I JUST LET SHIT LIKE THAT GO.
HEY, KODA? NAKASHIMA FELL OFF A CLIFF AND DIED.
LET'S GET TOGETHER JUST THE TWO OF US TODAY.
I like your hair like that, Esono.
HUH? YOU'RE SOMEWHERE NEARBY?
I-I THINK I'M GONNA START WRITING AGAIN.
Sorry.
I've gotta go.
I don't think we should see each other anymore.
HEY, WHAT THE HELL?!
I'VE ALREADY WRITTEN A LITTLE MORE ON THE SCRIPT!

I'm really... really sorry.
What I said the other day... that was a lie.
H...
I really do have a husband and a kid. I'm just a normal happy housewife.
HANG ON...
I'm just kind of sick of this life...
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
Are we just gonna keep growing up into horrible adults like this?
and everyone acts completely indifferent to anything that happens.
This intersection is always jam-packed,
YOU WERE CRYING...

When did I start feeling so indifferent to it all?

even myself.

Koda, Nakashima, my dad...

Can I ever find her,

or all the things I've lost...

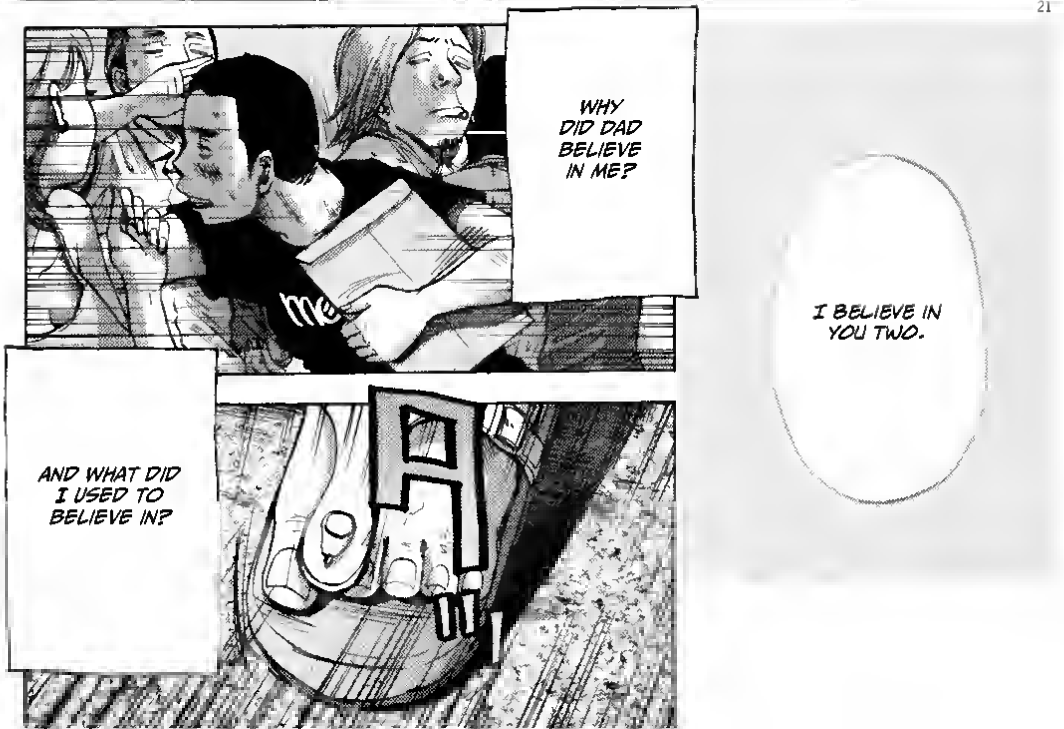
in this crowd?

I, KATSUHIKO ESONO, WILL WRITE THE SCRIPT!
WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP THE FILM CLUB GOING!
AND FATMAN NAKASHIMA HERE CAN BE THE CAMERA MAN!

M-MY HELP?
IT'S GOTTA BE YOU!

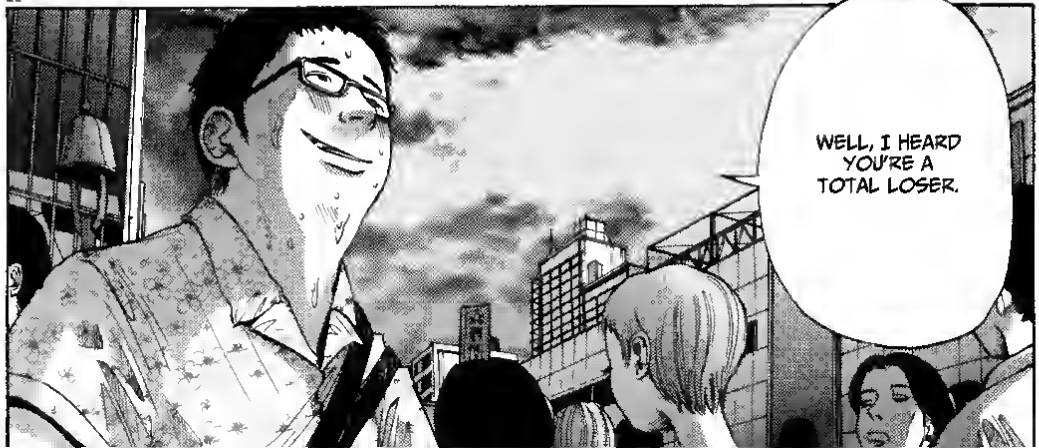
THE SCRIPT'S NOT FINISHED YET, BUT...
I WROTE IT FOR YOU!
I KNOW WE CAN MAKE A GREAT MOVIE TOGETHER!
TRUST ME!

KODA AND I STARTED DATING AFTER THAT, BUT I NEVER DID FINISH THE SCRIPT.
I'D LOVE TO!
What would have happened to us if we'd actually finished the film back then?

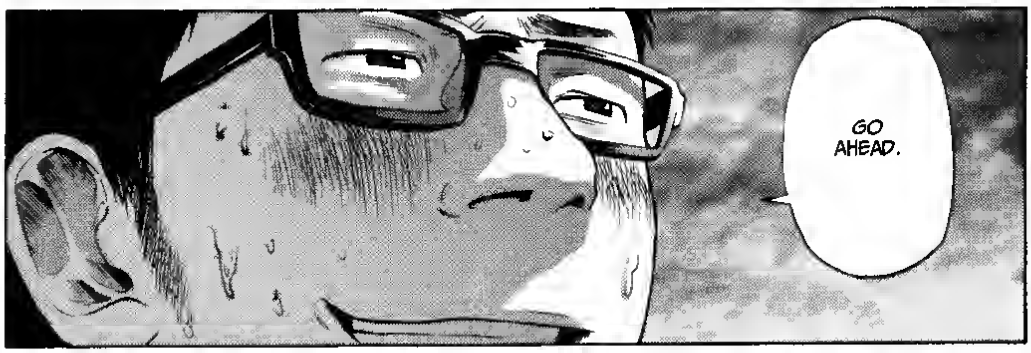

WHY DID DAD BELIEVE IN ME?
I BELIEVE IN YOU TWO.
AND WHAT DID I USED TO BELIEVE IN?

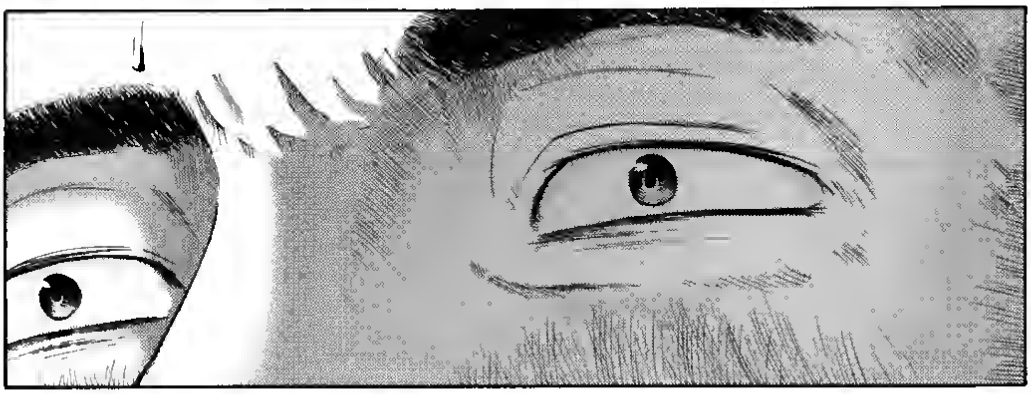
"H-HEY, NAKASHIMA, LONG TIME NO SEE!"
"I SEE YOU'RE FAT AS ALWAYS."
"H-HEY, ESONO, YOU CUT YOUR HAIR?"

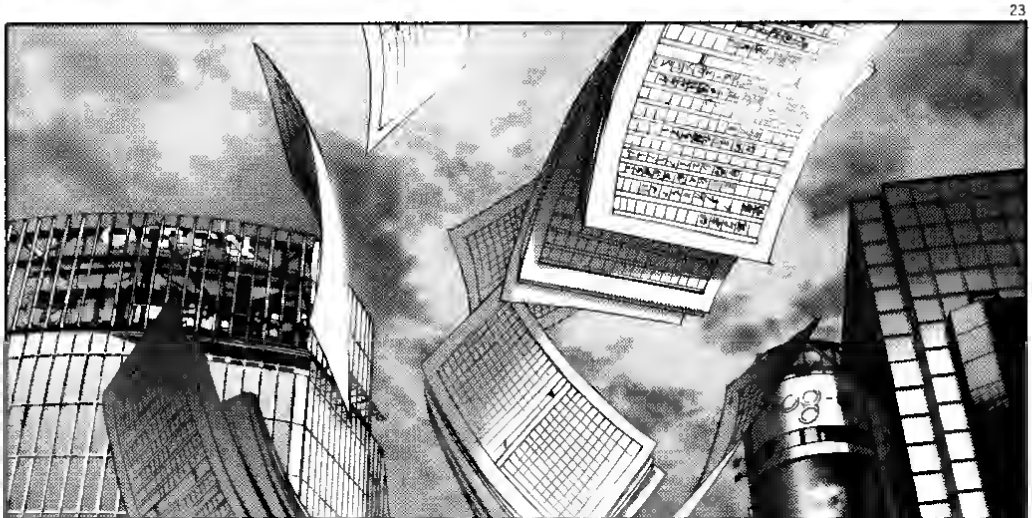
I HEARD YOU'VE REALLY TURNED INTO A DIS-GUSTING PIG
moog


WELL, I HEARD YOU'RE A TOTAL LOSER.

MIND IF I HIT YOU?


GO AHEAD.





WEREN'T YOU GOING TO HIT ME?
I HATE PAIN.
"Summer Memories."
I got an idea for a title:
One evening towards the end of a long summer,
YOU WANT TO GIVE US ANOTHER TRY?
SHIMA,

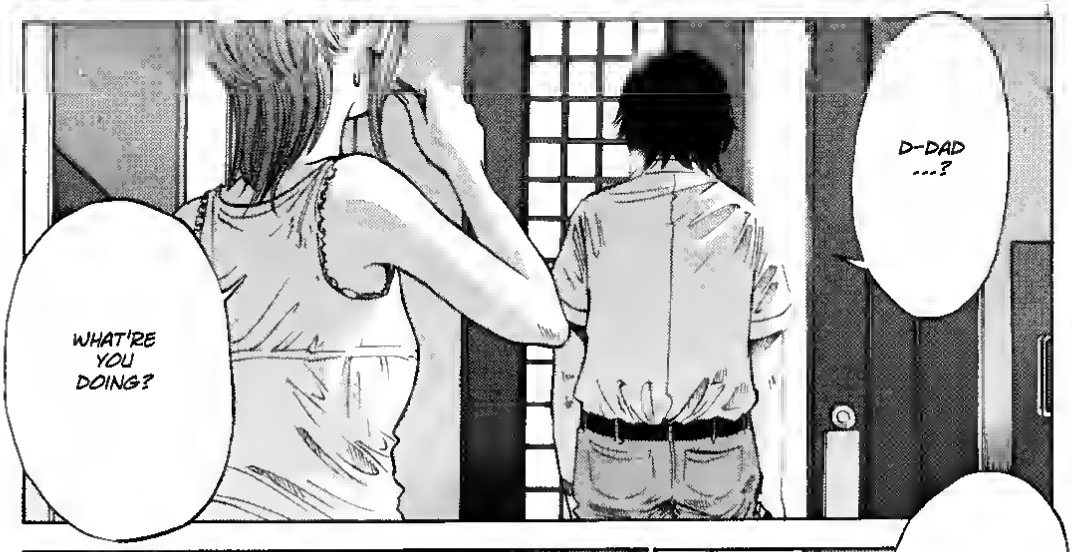
24

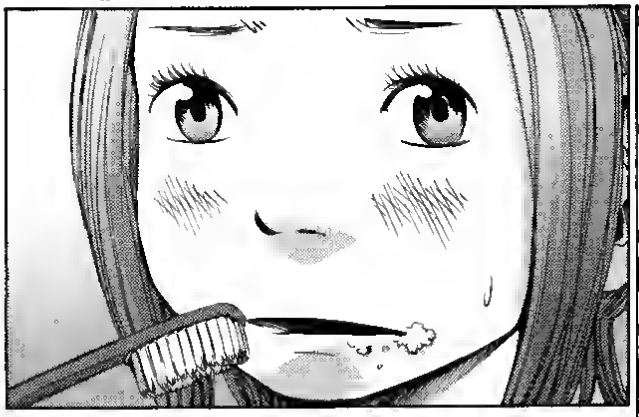
Sunday, 6:30 PM ① -END-

Looking back,

he'd definitely been acting weird the day he disappeared,

just standing there by the front door.



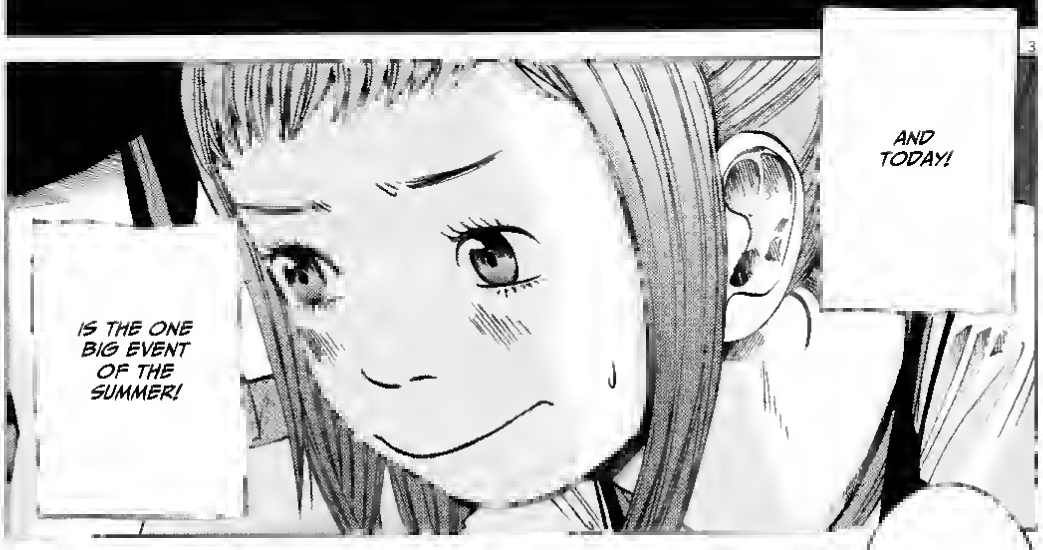


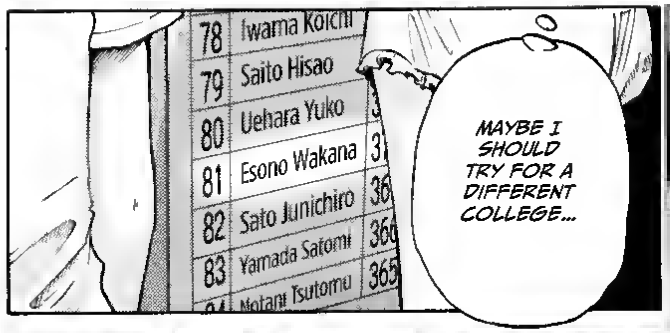
2

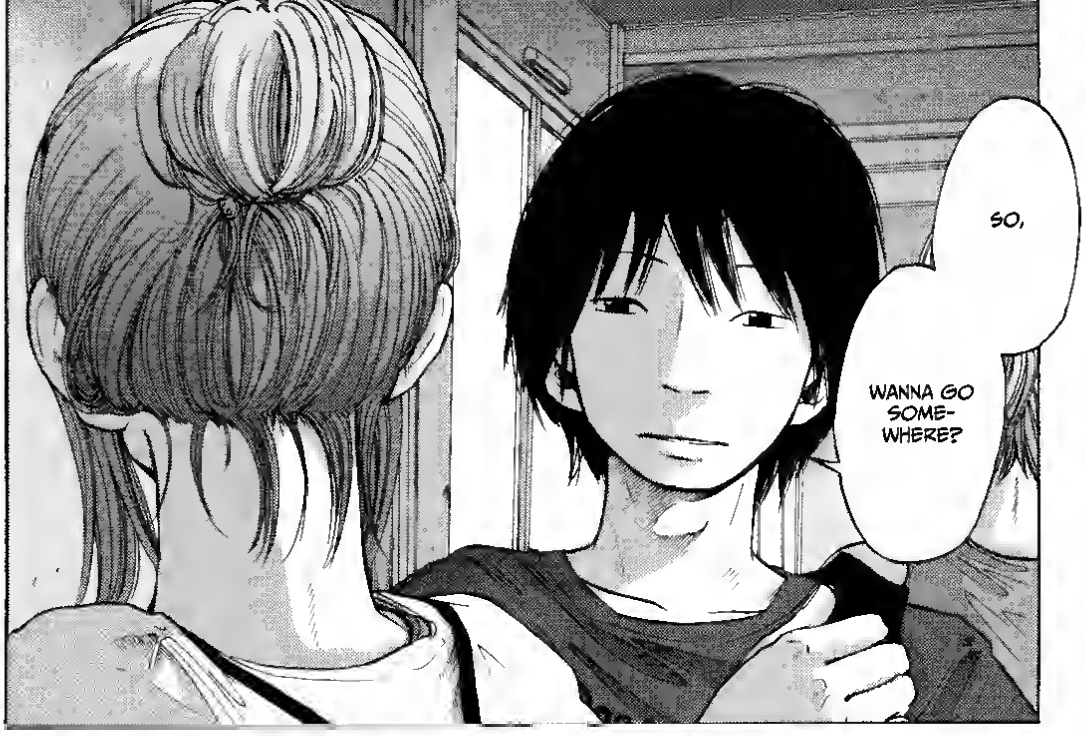
A GIRL IN THE BRILLIANT WORLD OF A BOY'S DAYDREAM

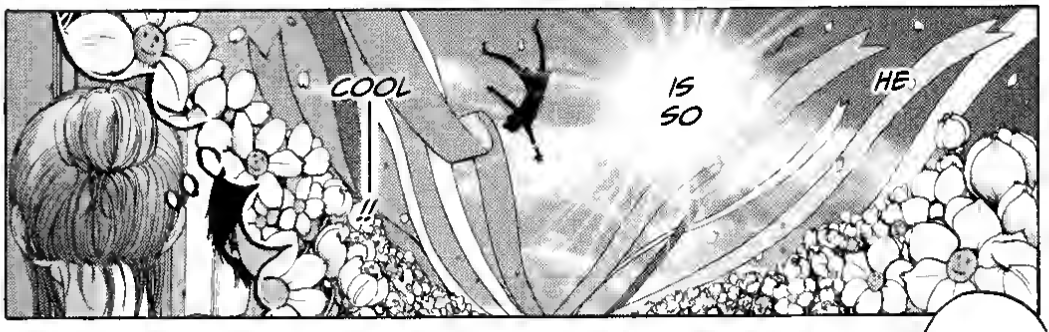
but it was summer and I was freaking out about college entrance exams.

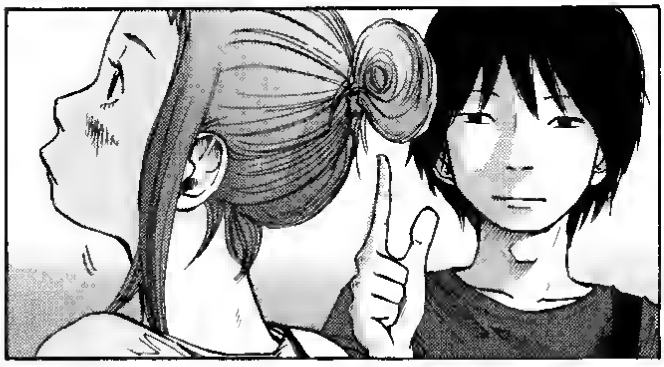
The words he mumbled to himself stuck with me,



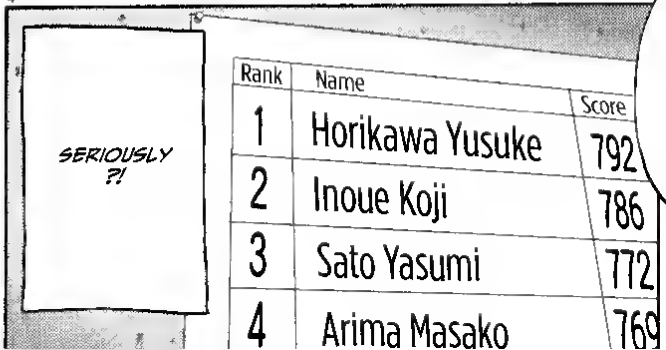


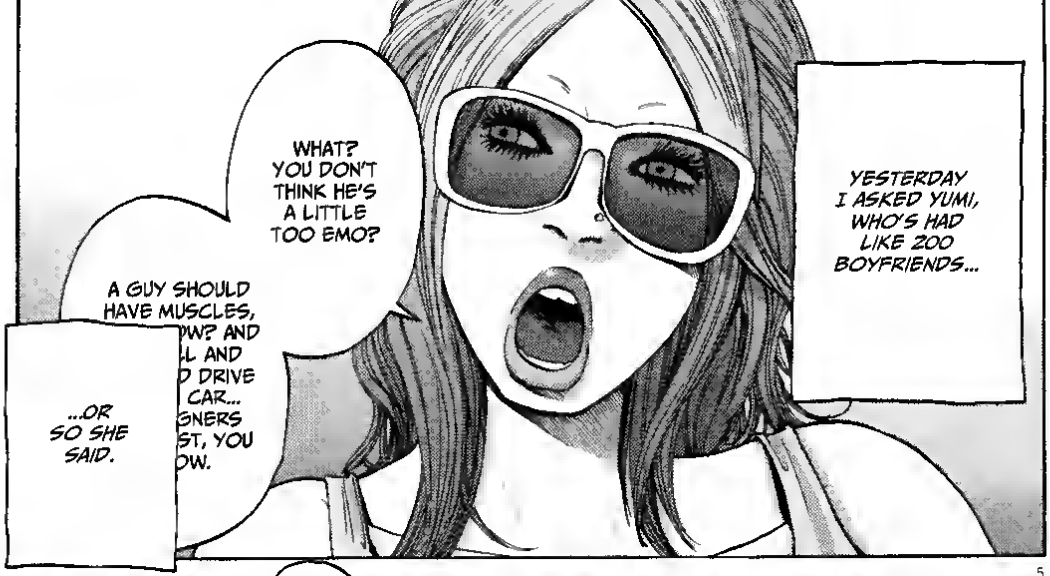

SO,
WANNA GO SOME-WHERE?


COOL
IS SO
HE



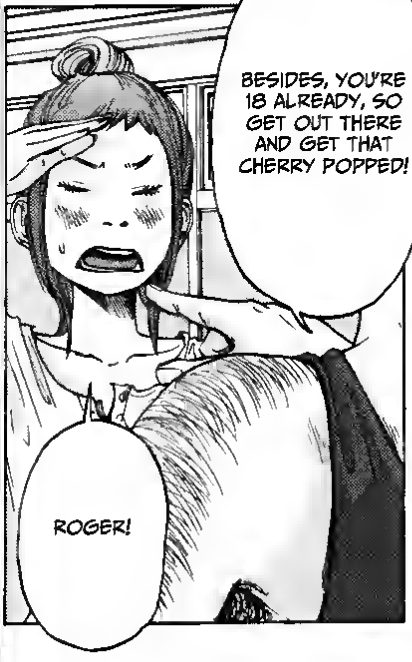
OH... HORIKAWA...
HOW'D YOU DO ON THE TEST?


SERIOUSLY ?!
Rank
Name
Score
1 Horikawa Yusuke 792
2 Inoue Koji 786
3 Sato Yasumi 772
4 Arima Masako 769

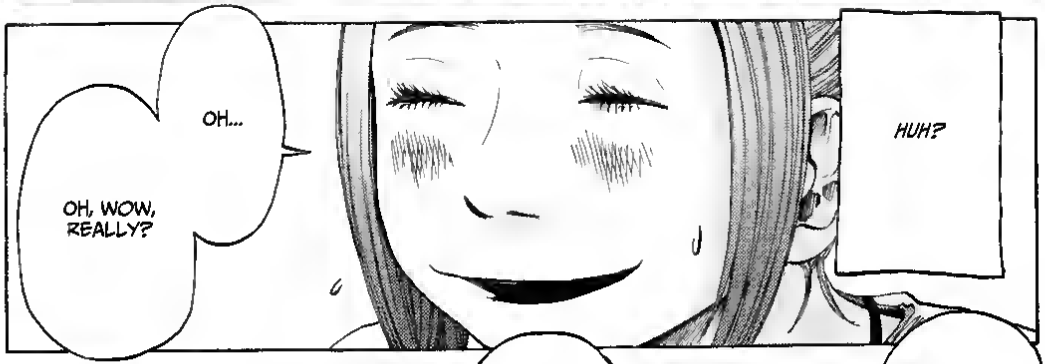

YESTERDAY I ASKED YUMI, WHO'S HAD LIKE ZOO BOYFRIENDS...
WHAT? YOU DON'T THINK HE'S A LITTLE TOO EMO?
A GUY SHOULD HAVE MUSCLES, ...OR SO SHE SAID.

THEN I ASKED KOMATSU, WHO'S GAY.
I CAN FEEL IT!
I CAN SENSE AN AMBITION DEEP WITHIN HIS EYES THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD!

and I asked him out on a date! (Rather forcefully!)
This gorgeous boy showed up like a breath of fresh air in the wasteland of my summer school class,


BESIDES, YOU'RE 18 ALREADY, SO GET OUT THERE AND GET THAT CHERRY POPPED!
ROGER!

OH, UH! SO WHAT HIGH SCHOOL DO YOU GO TO?!

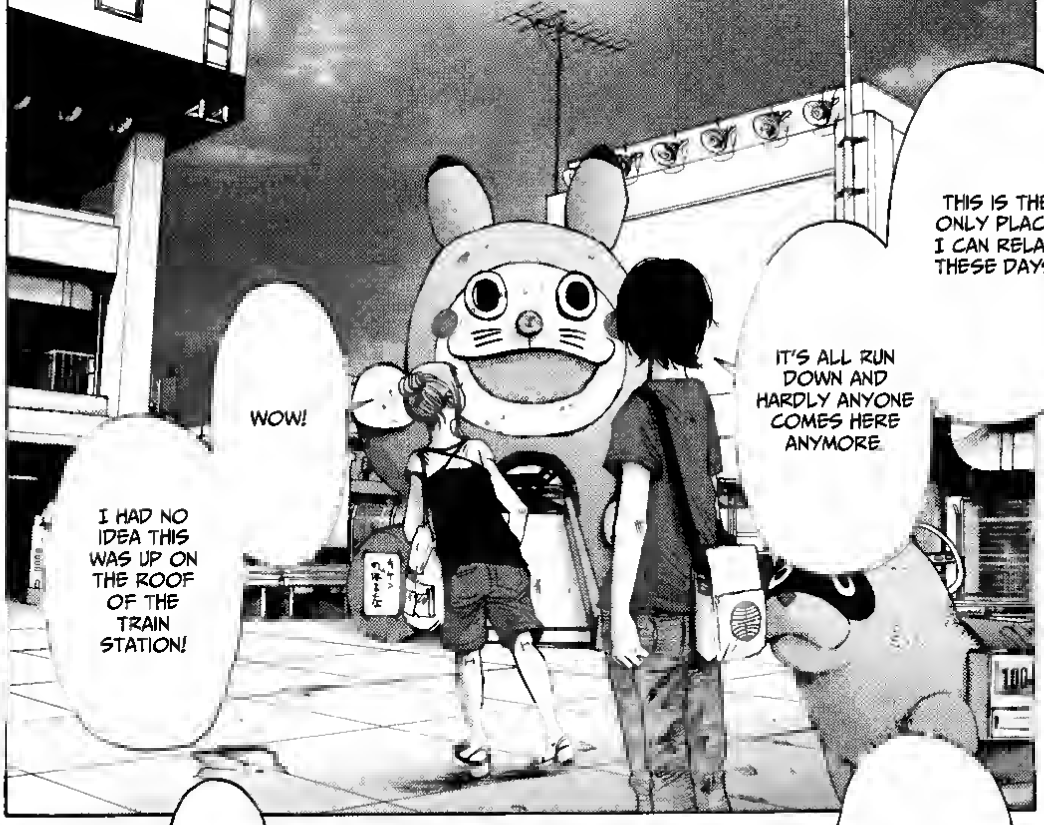


I HATE THAT SORT OF THING. IT'S SO PRIMITIVE.
OH, SO YOU WANT TO TAKE THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE QUALIFICATION EXAMINATION*!
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE TAKING THIS COURSE?
I DON'T REALLY BELIEVE IN THE WHOLE EDUCATION SYSTEM ANYWAY.
NAH,
I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW WELL I COULD DO.

*THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE QUALIFICATION EXAMINATION IS A TEST FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL TO SEE IF THEY QUALIFY FOR COLLEGE.

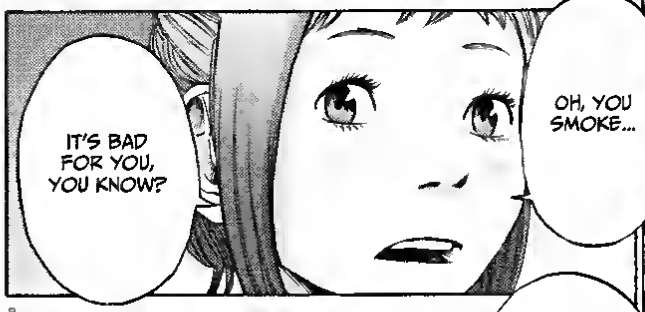
I PASSED THE TEST, THOUGH, SO I'M NOT GONNA BOTHER COMING BACK TOMORROW.
I WISH I WERE HALF AS SMART AS YOU...
THIS ISN'T A GAME, YOU KNOW...
あっはっは
Aha-haha!
それマジッパ超ウケるんですけど
That's, like, so fucking hilarious!
ギャはは
Haha-haha!

But he's so cute!
He's kind of weird.
SORRY,
WANNA GO SOMEWHERE ELSE?
HUH?
OH... SURE.
ゴロゴロゴロ
IT'S GOTTEN OVERCAST ALL OF A SUDDEN...


THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE I CAN RELAX THESE DAYS.
IT'S ALL RUN DOWN AND HARDLY ANYONE COMES HERE ANYMORE.
WOW!
I HAD NO IDEA THIS WAS UP ON THE ROOF OF THE TRAIN STATION!

YOU THINK?
I'M SICK OF IT.

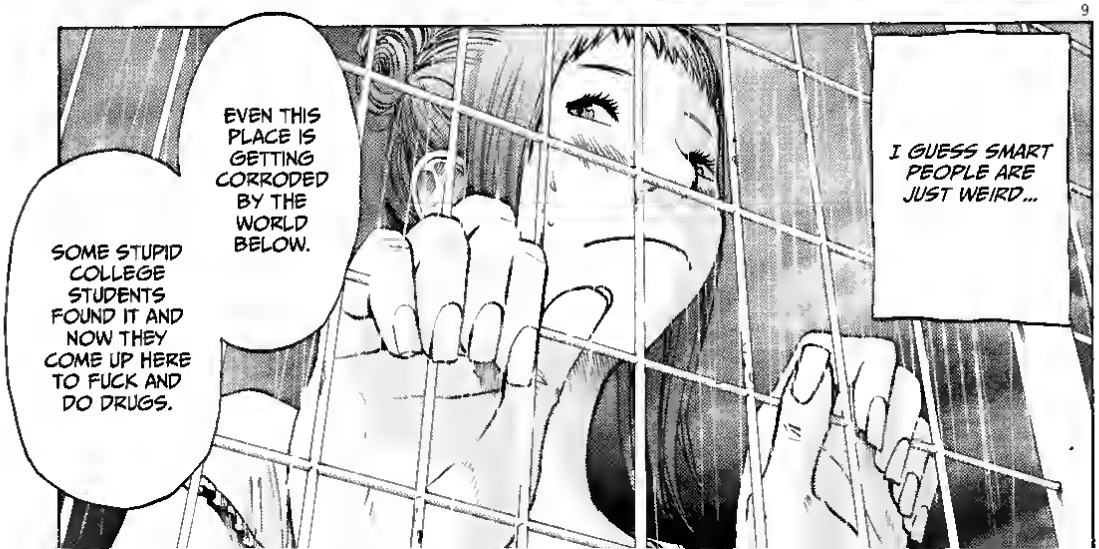
WHAT A GREAT VIEW!
I BET IT'S REALLY PRETTY WHEN IT'S NOT OVERCAST, HUH?
ゴロゴロ


IT'S BAD FOR YOU, YOU KNOW?
OH, YOU SMOKE...

THAT'S WHY I DO IT, DUH.

I MEAN, LOOK.
ANYONE CAN SEE THE WORLD'S ENDING.
IN AMERICA THEY'RE ALL ABOUT BEING HEALTHY...
...BUT WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT LIVING A LONG TIME ANYWAY?

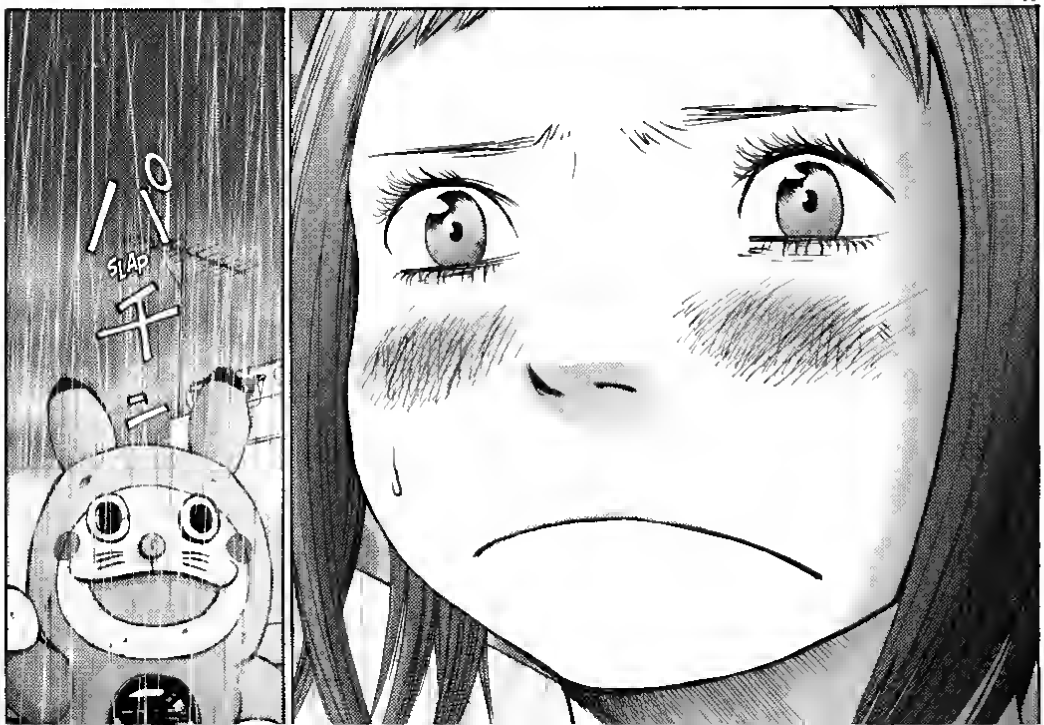
WHAT A MESS.
...ARE JUST TRYING TO FOB IT OFF ON OUR GENERATION.
THE ADULTS WHO BUILT THIS SOCIETY...


SOME STUPID COLLEGE STUDENTS FOUND IT AND NOW THEY COME UP HERE TO FUCK AND DO DRUGS.
EVEN THIS PLACE IS GETTING CORRODED BY THE WORLD BELOW.
I GUESS SMART PEOPLE ARE JUST WEIRD...

I WON'T CREATE ANYTHING, WON'T CAUSE ANYONE ANY TROUBLE, AND ONE DAY I'LL JUST DIE ALL ALONE LIKE A CAT.
IF YOU TAKE ONE STEP OUTSIDE, YOU'RE IN A WORLD WHERE LOUD, STUPID PEOPLE ARE THE WINNERS.
I have to say something.
I just...
SO LATELY I'VE STARTED THINKING MAYBE I WON'T EVEN COME OUT OF MY ROOM.
MY PARENTS ARE STUPID.
THEY'RE MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR INVESTMENTS THAN IN ME.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY...?
BUT THEN WHAT'S THE POINT IN LIVING?
I DON'T BLAME HIM.
I BET HE JUST LOST FAITH IN EVERYTHING.
I DUNNO... JUST WHATEVER...
RIGHT NOW I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY DAD. HE GOT LAID OFF AND THEN DISAPPEARED...
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT'RE YOU DOING AFTER YOU GRADUATE?

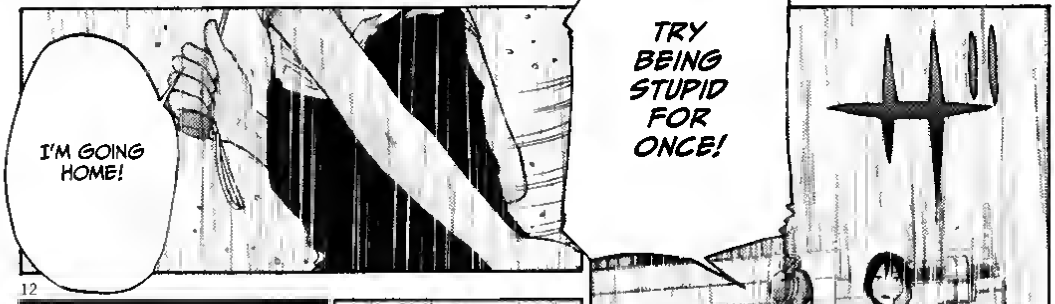
HEY, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
HOW COME YOU WENT OUT WITH ME TODAY?
I don't like this...
I DO.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MY DAD FEELS.

...HOW A GIRL IN LOVE WOULD ACT.
I WAS JUST CURIOUS...


SLAP

YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING...

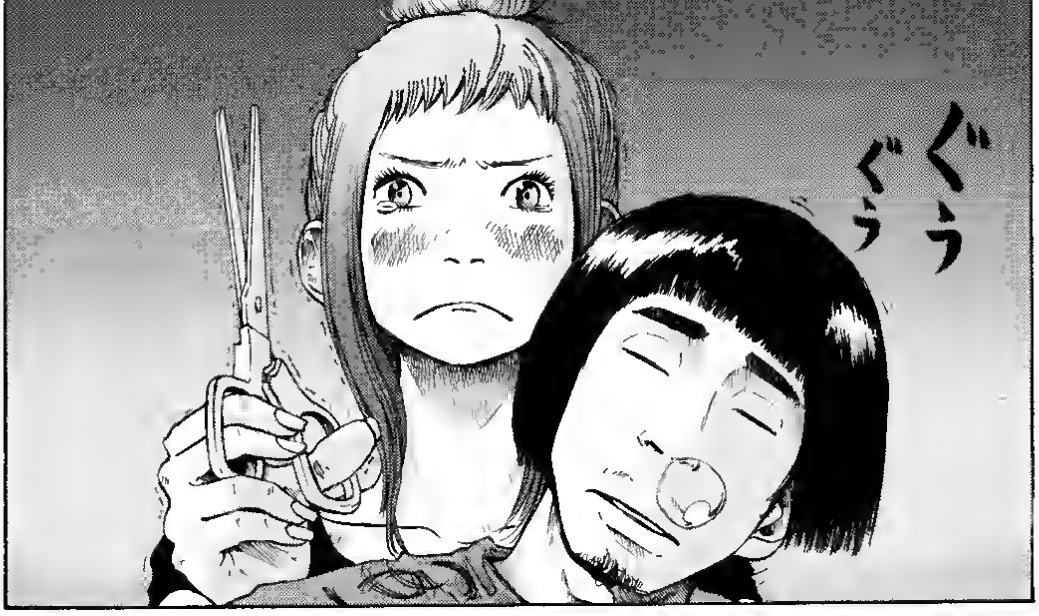
BUT YOU'VE NEVER EVEN EXPERIENCED ANY REAL DISAPPOINTMENT!
QUIT ACTING LIKE YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME!


TRY BEING STUPID FOR ONCE!
I'M GOING HOME!

He really pisses me off!

but I still have my own problems and am trying to do the best I can!
Maybe I'm stupid, and maybe I don't know anything about the government or the world,
HOW CAN SHE BE SO FREE...?

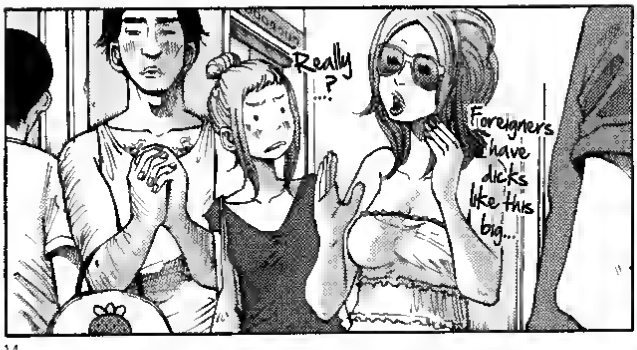
With Mom dead, I'm more worried about housework than the state of the world!

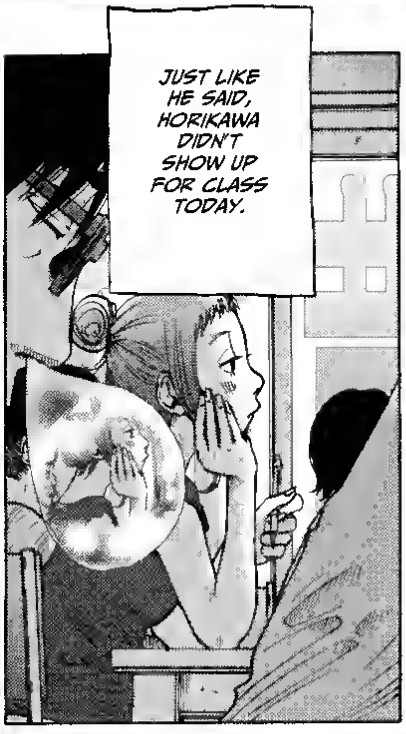


Oooh...

It's over!

Summer is over!





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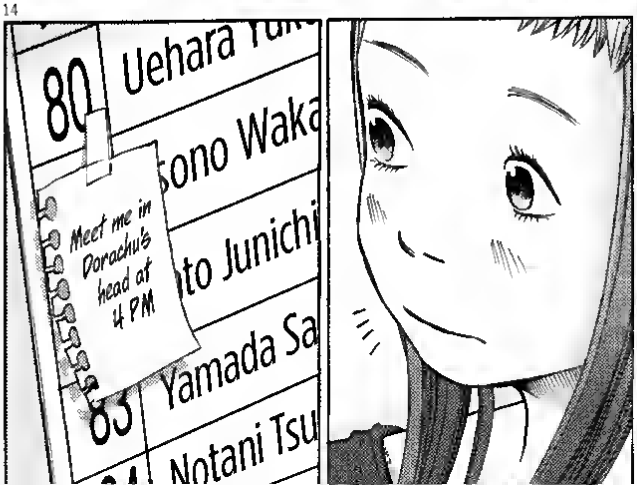
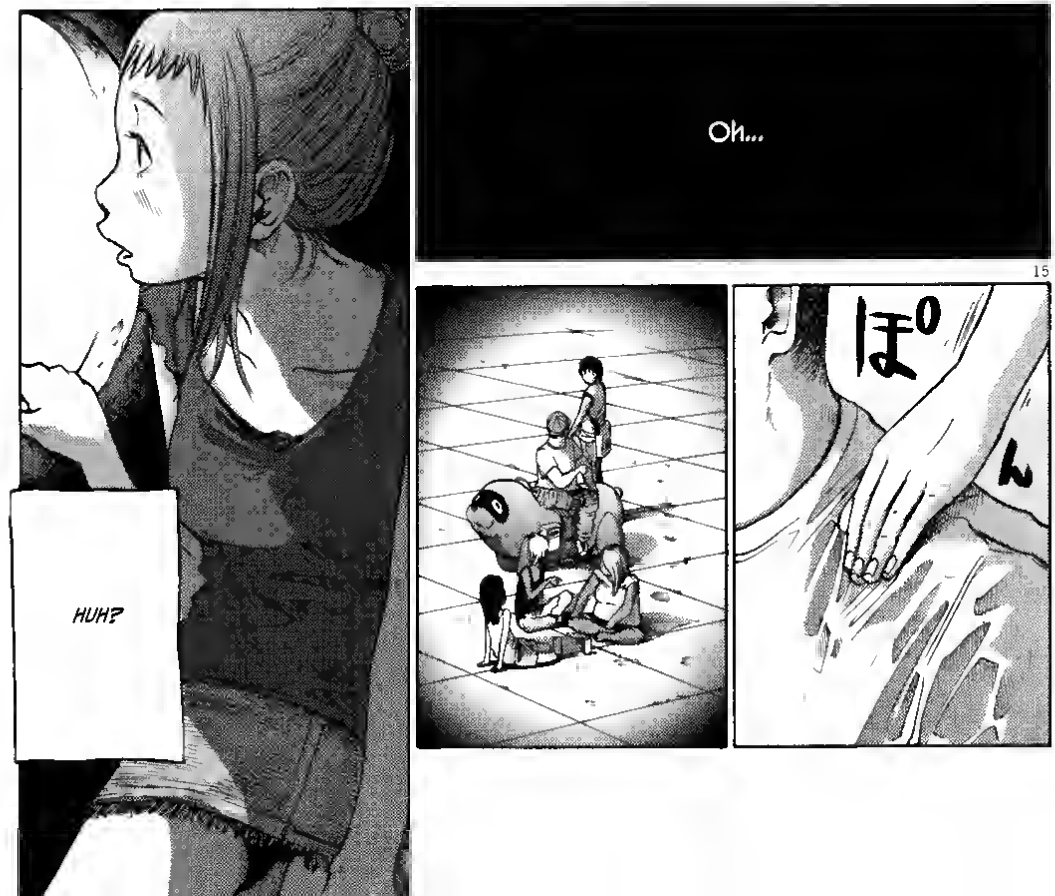
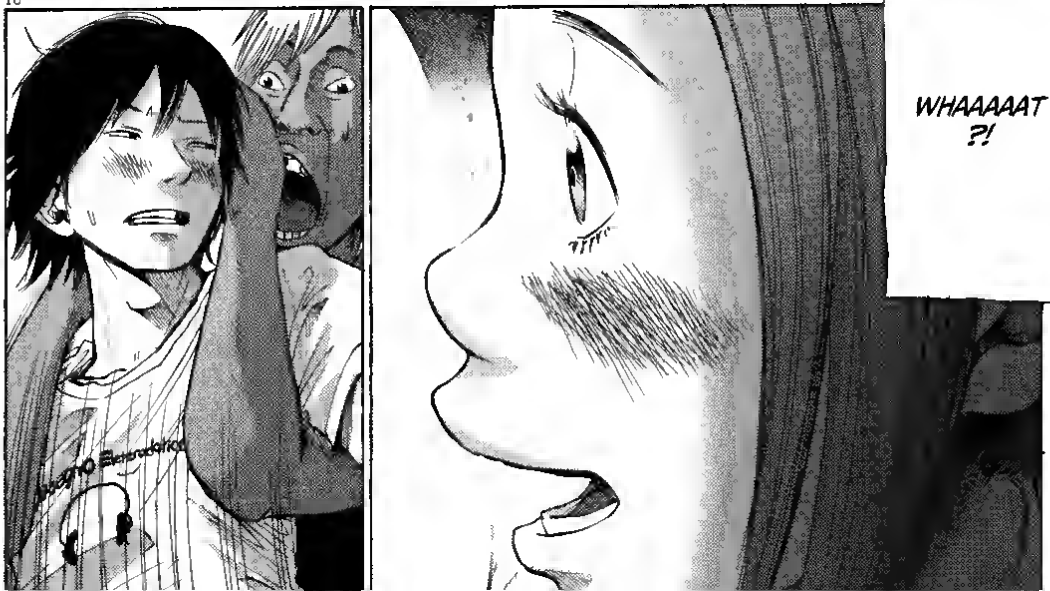


HORIKAWA ...?
それマジ超ウケるんですけど
ギャハハハ
Haha-haha!
That's, like, so fucking hilarious!
WHAT'S GOING ON?

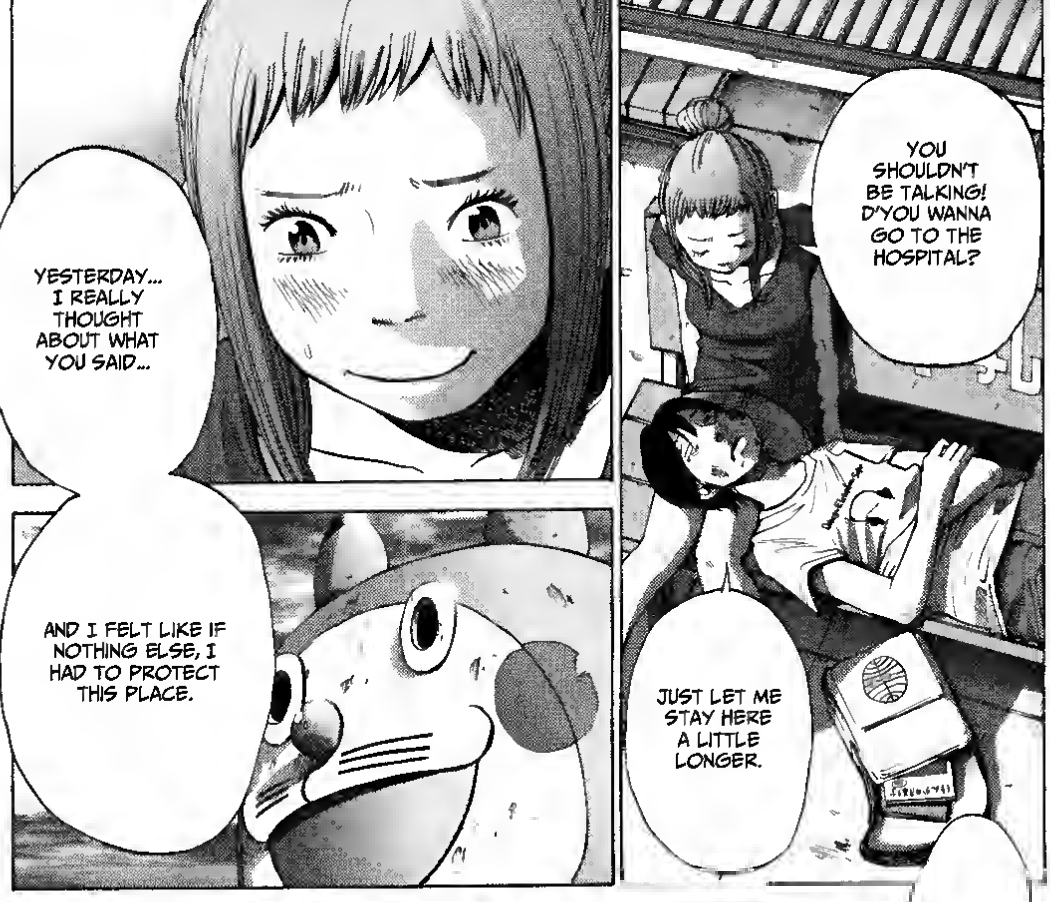

Oh...
HUH?
ぽ
ん

WHAT?!


WHAAAAAT?!

OH...
HIS...
PRETTY FACE...

Are you stupid?!!


YOU SHOULDN'T BE TALKING! D'YOU WANNA GO TO THE HOSPITAL?
JUST LET ME STAY HERE A LITTLE LONGER.
YESTERDAY... I REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID...
AND I FELT LIKE IF NOTHING ELSE, I HAD TO PROTECT THIS PLACE.

I...
...THINK I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN.

MAYBE IT'S YOU.

ESONO,
D'YOU REALLY THINK THE VIEW IS PRETTY?
YEAH,
IT'S GLITTERING.
One evening towards the end of a long summer,
I had a feeling,
like something was just starting.

20

I HOPE YOUR DAD COMES HOME SOON.
HE WILL, I KNOW IT.

Looking back,

it was odd that I woke at the usual time,

when there was nothing to get up for.

AS I STOOD THERE BY THE FRONT DOOR, IT REALLY HIT HOME THAT I HAD NOWHERE TO GO.
MY KNEES CRACKLED PATHETICALLY.
I...
...BELIEVE IN YOU TWO.

3 COMING HOME

"I BELIEVE IN YOU," I MUTTERED OVER AND OVER.
MAYBE THAT WAS JUST BRAVADO.
AFTER THAT, I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS...
...WANDERING THE MOUNTAIN ROADS IN SEARCH OF A CERTAIN PLACE.

WH-
WHAT'S A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL DOING OUT ON A MOUNTAIN ROAD?!!
ARE YOU A GHOST?! ARE YOU?!
YOU SEEM PRETTY SUSPICIOUS YOURSELF, YOU KNOW.

HEY,
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?
I'M NOT. YOU JUST HAPPEN TO BE WALKING IN FRONT OF ME.
NO WAY!
IMPOSSIBLE!
I'M SEARCHING FOR SOME-WHERE!
OH, REALLY?
WELL, I'M SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO DIE.
HEH, HEHEHE.
WELL, THAT DOES SEEM LIKE THE SORT OF STUPID THING YOUNG PEOPLE DO.
SO HEY, JUST THEORETICALLY, RIGHT?

THEORETICALLY, IF A GIRL GOT DUMPED,
THEN RAN AWAY BECAUSE SHE WASN'T GETTING ON WITH HER PARENTS...
...AND DECIDED TO DO A PORNO TO EARN SOME MONEY, BUT CHICKENED OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE,
AND THEN GOT BEAT UP BY SOME ASSHOLES AND ABANDONED BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE...
...WOULDN'T YOU THINK THAT WAS A GOOD ENOUGH REASON FOR A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL TO DIE?

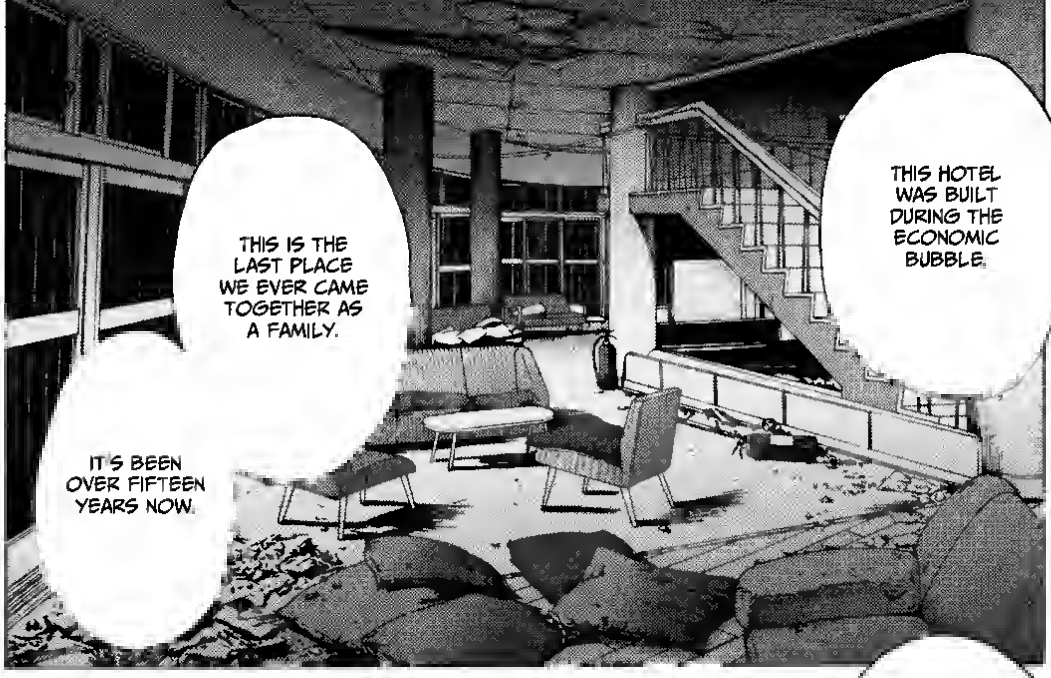
MM... HMM...

WHAT IS IT?
HMM?
TH-THIS IS IT. THE PLACE I WAS SEARCHING FOR.

SIGN:
THIS HOTEL IS CLOSED FOR BUSINESS AS OF MAY, 1998

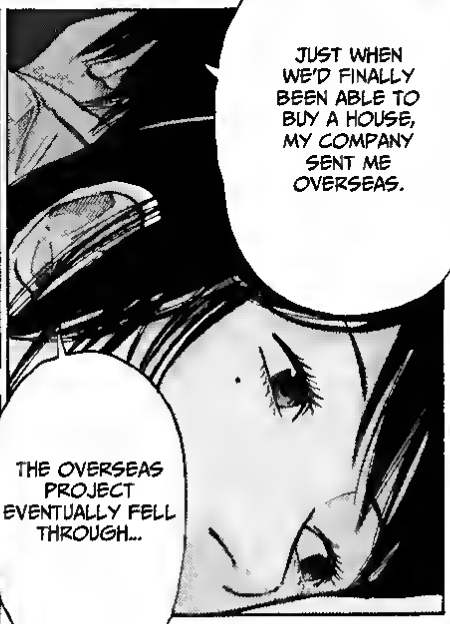
SUNSET'S GETTING EARLIER AND EARLIER.
WELL, SUMMER'S ALMOST OVER.
YOU HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT, HAVE YOU?
THANKS.
GO ON, EAT IT!

TELL ME A STORY. SOMETHING INTERESTING.
WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS INTERESTING OR NOT, BUT...


THIS HOTEL WAS BUILT DURING THE ECONOMIC BUBBLE.
THIS IS THE LAST PLACE WE EVER CAME TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.
IT'S BEEN OVER FIFTEEN YEARS NOW.

I THOUGHT IF I CAME HERE, I COULD REMEMBER HOW HAPPY I USED TO BE...
...BUT ALL THE MEMORIES ARE PAINFUL.

...BUT WHEN I RETURNED TO JAPAN, MY WIFE BECAME ILL AND DIED.

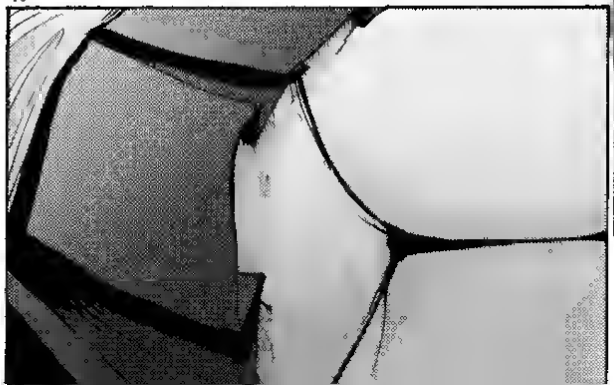

JUST WHEN WE'D FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO BUY A HOUSE, MY COMPANY SENT ME OVERSEAS.
THE OVERSEAS PROJECT EVENTUALLY FELL THROUGH...

NOW MY KIDS ARE ALL GROWN AND ARE LIKE ALIENS TO ME.

THE IDEAL FAMILY I'D DREAMED OF HAD CRUMBLED OVER THE YEARS,
AND ALL I COULD DO WAS THROW MYSELF INTO MY WORK...
AND THEN I GOT FIRED AND LOOK AT ME NOW.
BETRAYED BY MY FAMILY...
HEADLINE: ECONOMIC BUBBLE BURST
BETRAYED BY MY COMPANY...
BETRAYED BY SOCIETY...

What else is there left to believe in?

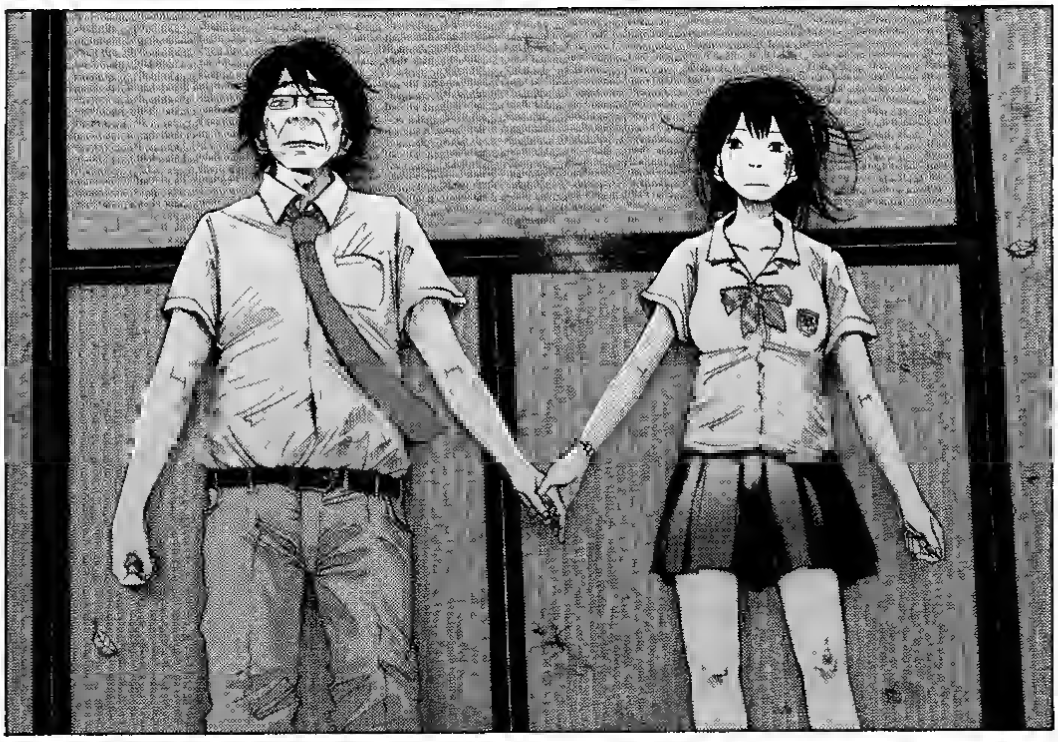
10



HOW MUCH?
1000 YEN TO HOLD HANDS, 10,000 YEN FOR A KISS, AND 50,000 YEN FOR SEX.
Gwh! んが
whmd
ぐぐ
TH-TH-THAT'S TOO EXPENSIVE! WAY TOO EXPENSIVE!
YOU NEED MONEY, DON'T YOU?
JUST KIDDING.
I DON'T MIND. YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GUY.
YOUR HAND...
...IS WARM.

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I'VE HELD ANYONE'S HAND LIKE THIS?
HM?
WHAT? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
SPEAK UP! I CAN'T HEAR YOU.
Get well, Mom
Wakana
HAHA...
YOUR HAND'S COLD...

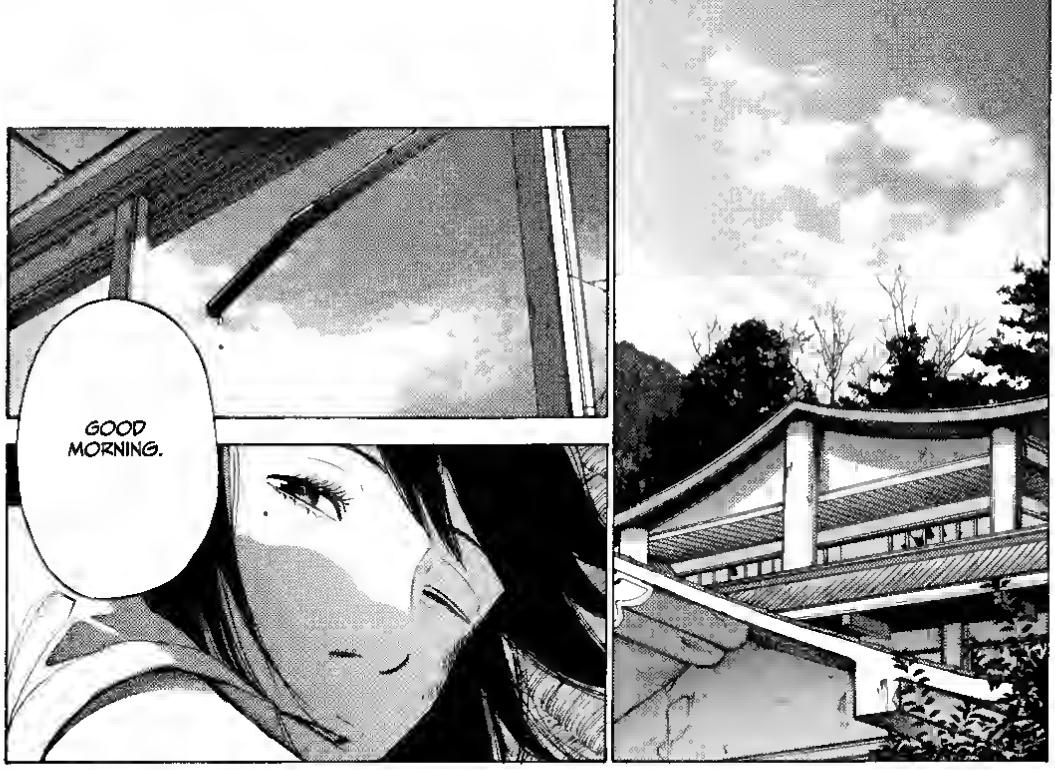
I BELIEVE IN YOU.

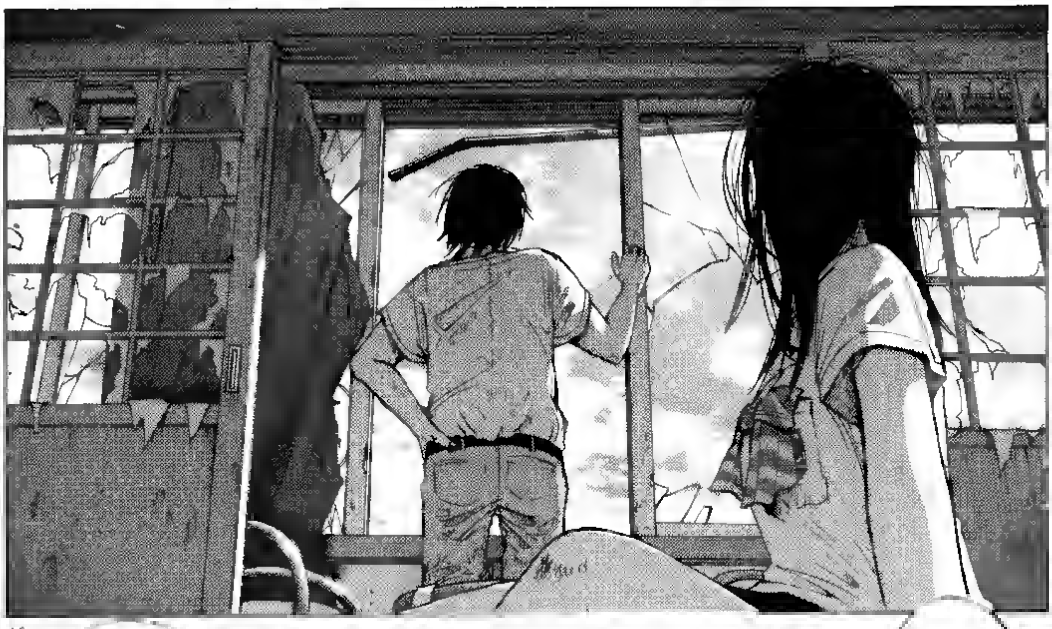


YOU REMIND ME...
...OF MY WIFE WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG.

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN BEAUTIFUL.
THAT'S LIKE COMPLIMENTING YOURSELF.
I HOPE...
...SOMEDAY YOU FIND OUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU...

VSSSSH


GOOD MORNING.



THE SUN'S OUT.
LOOK...

HI,
IT'S ME.
クリーン
GIMME THE
PHONE.
OH!
DAD?!
Hello?
OH,
KATSUHIKO.

HOW STUPID ARE YOU?!
GET YOUR ASS BACK HOME, NOW!

YOU SHOULD GO HOME, TOO.

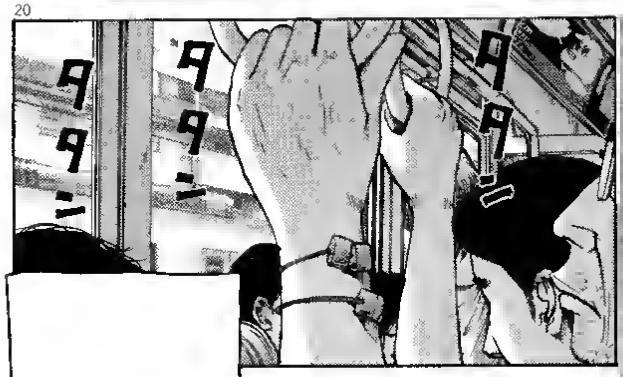
ブゥゥゥゥゥゥ
ミーン
ミーン
ミーン
ミーン

WHATEVER HAPPENS...

...YOUR FAMILY IS ALWAYS WAITING FOR YOU TO COME HOME.

YOU WANT THIS?
HEY, MISTER.
HMM?
WHAT WOULD I DO WITH THAT...?
I'M KINDA GONNA MISS YOU, SO...
HOW ABOUT...
WELL, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO GIVE YOU IN RETURN...

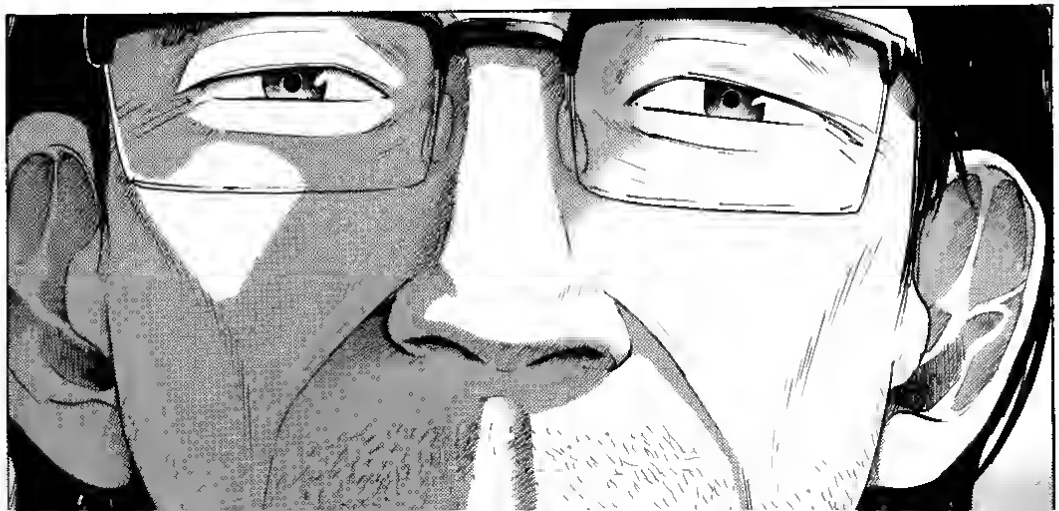
It took no time at all to get home.



...I'D HATED SO MUCH.

I EVEN FELT A LITTLE NOSTALGIC FOR THE JUMBLE OF BUILDINGS AND CROWDED TRAINS...

THE CLOSER I GOT TO HOME, THE MORE I COULD FEEL MY WORRIES THREATENING TO CRUSH ME.
ALL THAT AWAITED ME WAS HARSH REALITY.
BUT IN THE END IT DIDN'T SOLVE ANYTHING.



WE'RE HOME!
KATSUHIKO, NO RUNNING IN THE HALLWAY.
SHALL I GET YOUR BATH READY, DEAR?
NO, NO, WE JUST GOT HOME. YOU SHOULD RELAX FOR A WHILE, TOO.
I LOVE COMING HOME.
WHEW!
I'M BEAT!
NO FAIR, SANAE! THAT'S MY SEAT!

The ideal family I'd dreamed of back then no longer exists.

Can I still believe in them?

But...

That's what family is all about.

I can.

I'M HOME.

24

and a nostalgic song was playing on the TV in the living room.

I heard the cicadas chirping and smelled dinner cooking,

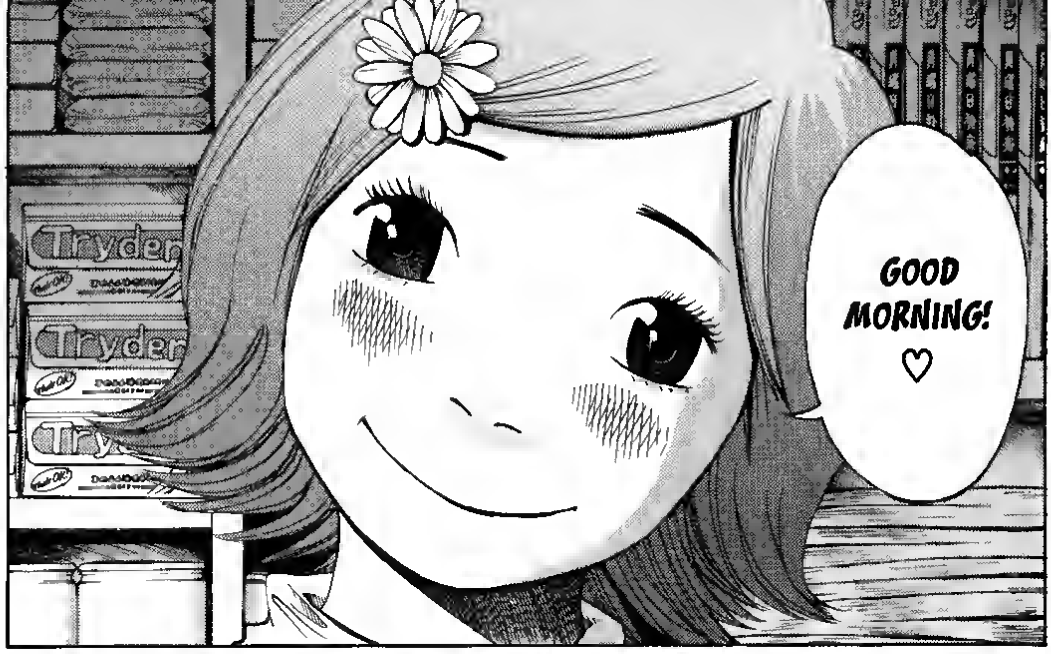
One evening towards the end of a long summer,

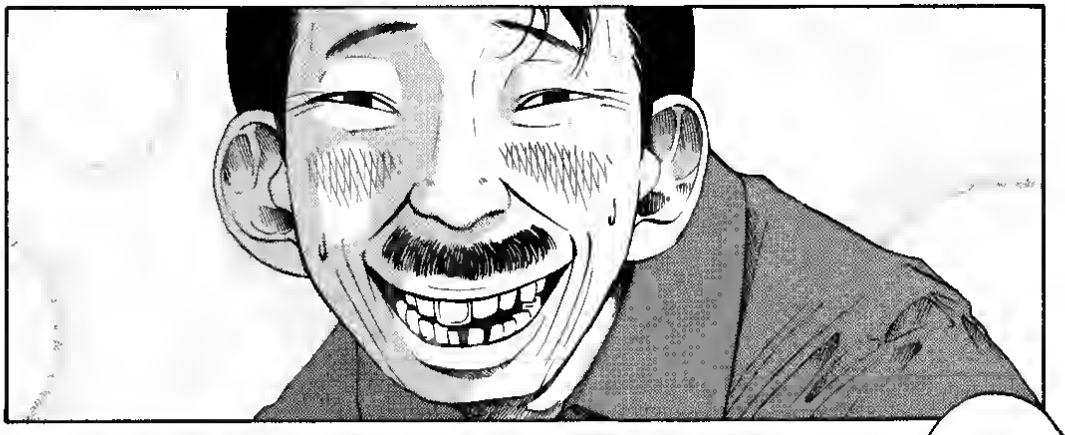
Sunday, 6:30 PM ③ -END-

A Day in the Melancholy Life of A-ko the Daydreamer

First published in *Sunday GX*, Issue of September 2006 (September 19, 2006).

SAMURAI
THE 21ST CENTURY
OTAKU
LOL
MT. FUJI
THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR
THE INTERNET


GOOD MORNING! ♡



2

MAAAN, SEEING YOUR SMILE CHASES THE BLUES AWAY!
LIKE THE FACT THAT MY DIVORCE ISN'T GOING WELL.

G-GOOD MORNING, EIKO!
NICE WEATHER, ISN'T IT?!

SO... UH...
EIKO...
COULD I GET ANOTHER SMILE? PLEASE...?
THANKS FOR YOUR BUSINESS. ♡
AH!
PIERCING!!
THIS IS THE STORY OF A DAY IN THE LIFE...
...OF EIKO (A-KO) TAJIMA, WHO WORKS AT A TRAIN STATION IN THE CITY.
The train is now arriving at platform 8.

Please stay behind the white line...

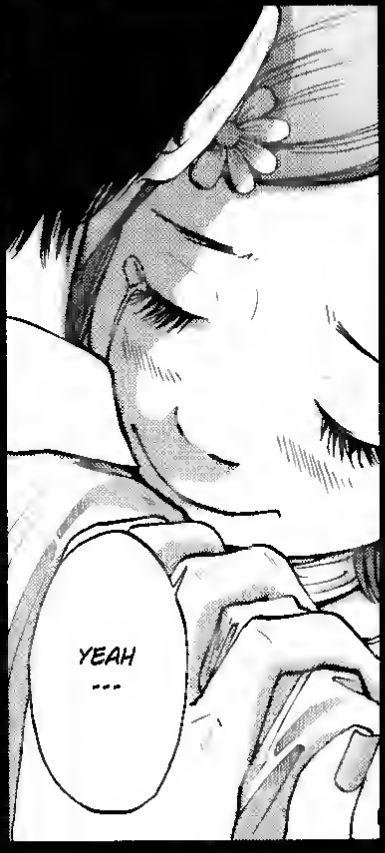
HE...

choo
choo
HE'S TOTALLY MY TYPE!

THAT CLEAN, SILKY HAIR AND THAT CHISELED JAW! HE'S TALL AND SLENDER AND LOOKS GOOD IN A SUIT, BUT THE WAY HE SQUINTS A LITTLE IN THE MORNING SUN IS JUST SO ADORABLE!
BUT HE LOOKS A LITTLE TIRED.
I BET HIS STUPID BALDING BOSS DROPPED A TON OF WORK ON HIM JUST BECAUSE HE'S YOUNG AND SMART!
すじっカム
THAT'LL BE 105 YEN.
OH...
ぎゅ...
BUT... BUT I'M SORRY...
I CAN NEVER BE YOURS ALONE...
"That's what she said"! Haha!
That's what she said.
THAT WOULD BE PERFECT!
YOU SEE, I... I AM EVERYONE'S BELOVED EIKO!
THE TRUTH IS, I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU FOR A WHILE...

EVEN SO...
EVEN SO, I LOVE YOU.

THE TRUTH IS, I'D BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO SAY THOSE WORDS, YUJI (NOT HIS REAL NAME)!
OH... FORGIVE MY SELF-ISHNESS.


YEAH ...

LET'S GET MARRIED!

EIKO, HOLD OUT YOUR HAND.
SAVE ME FROM THIS MESSED-UP WORLD!
?
CAR: JAGUAR

I WILL GIVE YOU ALL MY LOVE, SO YOU JUST GIVE ME BACK 100 TIMES THAT AND KEEP WORKING YOURSELF TO THE BONE.

BECAUSE

LOVE IS ALL

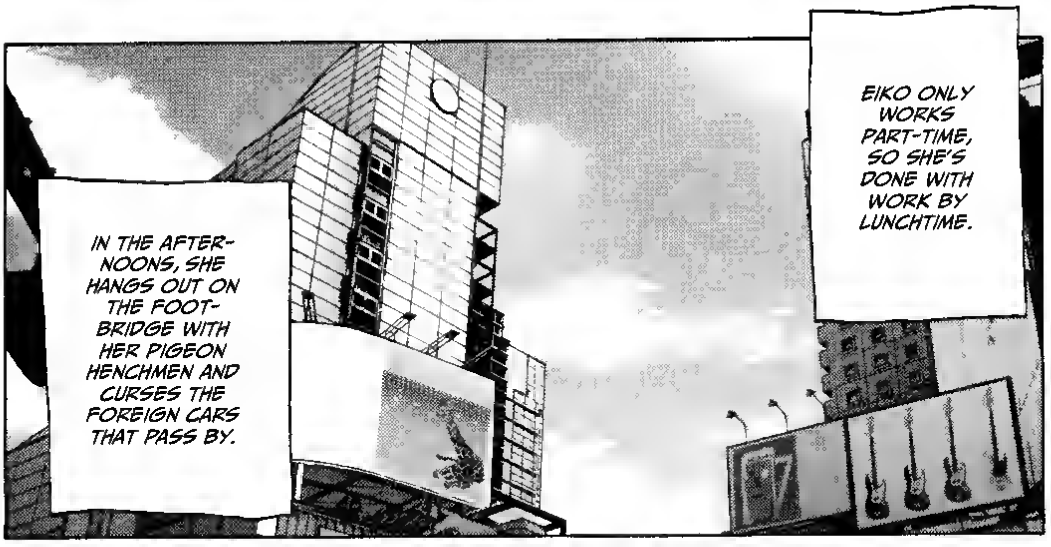
YOU NEED!

I DON'T NEED CARTIER OR GUCCI OR HERMES OR A RING OR A FANCY CAR OR A LOT OF VACATIONS OVERSEAS OR A YEARLY INCOME OF 10 MILLION YEN OR A PENTHOUSE SUITE THAT OVERLOOKS THE CITY OR BEACH! (NOT THAT I WOULD SAY NO TO ANY OF THAT.)

WHAT A WEIRDO...
UH... EXCUSE ME...
OH, THAT'LL BE 105 YEN!
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
squeeze...
UH... UM... THE TRUTH IS...
I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU FOR A WHILE...
haf haf

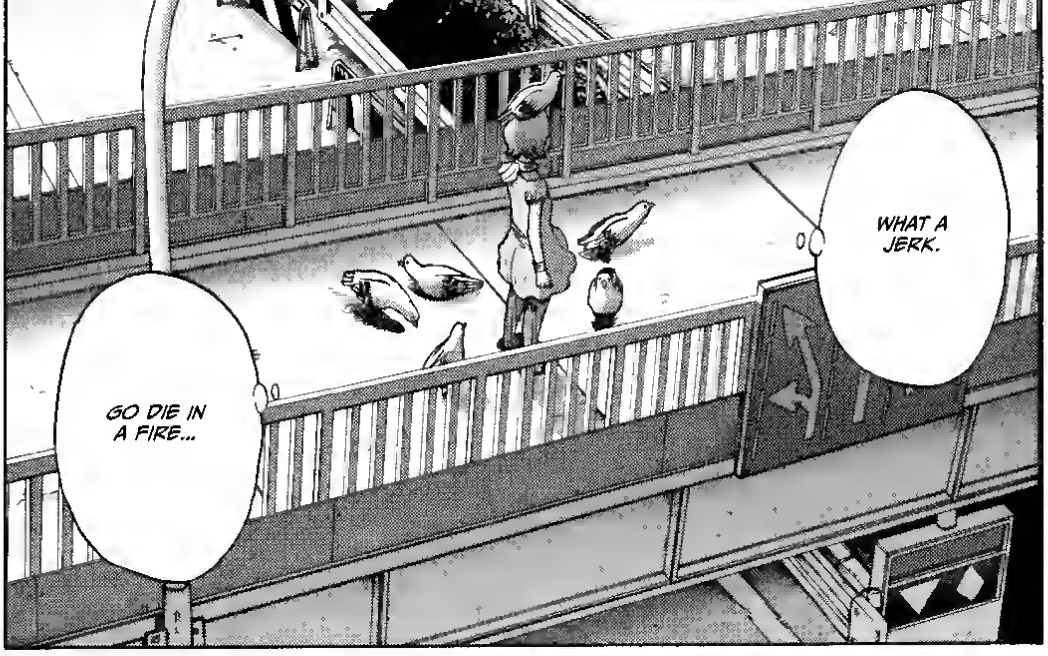
御手洗
HEY, HEY, SAY THAT AGAIN?
TH-THE TRUTH IS, I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU FOR A WHILE...
GYAH HA HA
BIG THUMB
BIG THUMB
I BET YOU'RE SOME SHUT-IN WHO LIVES WITH HIS PARENTS AND JERKS OFF ALL DAY!
YOU LIKE ME?! SO WHAT?!
LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE FILTHY! HAVE YOU BEEN OUT BUYING PORNO GAMES?!
THEN YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE GOD ON THE INTERNET!
I NEVER SAID--
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?! JUST CRAWL BACK IN YOUR MAMA'S WOMB AND START OVER FROM SCRATCH!
...AND JUST SIT AROUND BITCHING ABOUT HOW NO ONE ACCEPTS YOU AS YOU ARE!
YOU PROBABLY NEVER DO A THING TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE...
=AIEEEE=

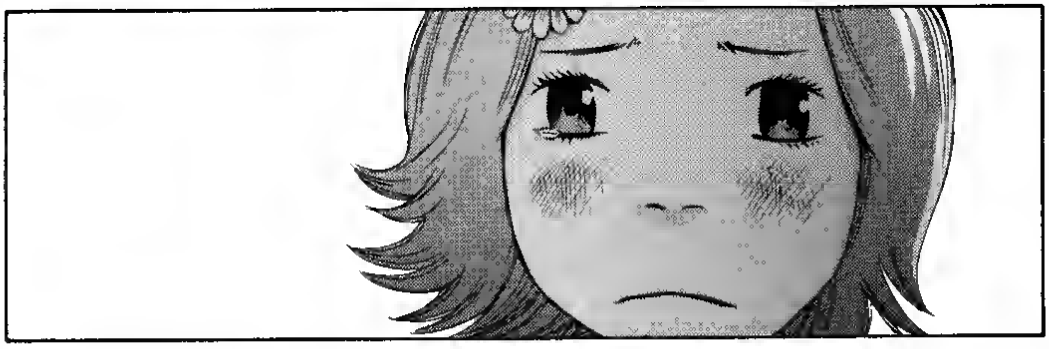
WAAAAH!
うえーん
I'M GOING TO SUE YOU FOR THIS!
IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THEN SUCK IT UP AND MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF!
ひいいいい
ゴッゴッゴッ
MAYBE IN A MILLION YEARS YOU'LL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO TALK TO ME!
IF YOU EVER COME BACK HERE AGAIN, I'LL FUCKING BURN YOUR HOUSE DOWN!

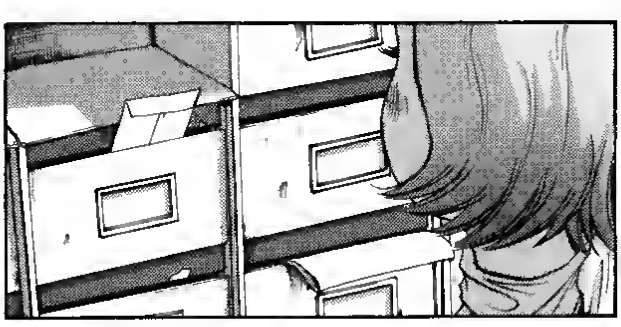

EIKO ONLY WORKS PART-TIME, SO SHE'S DONE WITH WORK BY LUNCHTIME.
IN THE AFTER-NOONS, SHE HANGS OUT ON THE FOOT-BRIDGE WITH HER PIGEON HENCHMEN AND CURSES THE FOREIGN CARS THAT PASS BY.

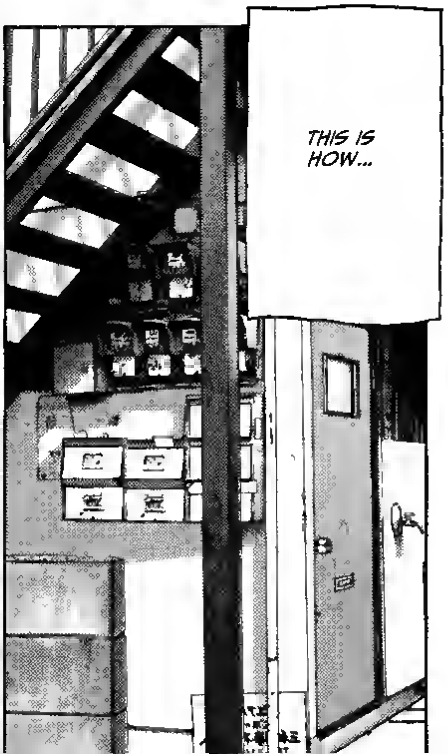
I WAS SERIOUSLY BUMMED!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE COMPANY CAR GOT TOWED WHILE I WAS OUT!
AHAHA, THAT'S HILARIOUS!
OH...
YUJI (NOT HIS REAL NAME)...
BUT WON'T YOU GET IN TROUBLE IF THEY FIND OUT YOU WERE WITH ME WHILE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE CLOCK, KOICHI?
NAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
BESIDES, I DON'T FEEL LIKE WORKING TODAY.
IT'S JUST SALES ANYWAY, WHO'S GONNA KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?
...
WHAT'S WITH THAT GIRL?
ANY GIRL WHO DRESSES THAT PROVOCATIVELY HAS GOT ULTERIOR MOTIVES, YOU KNOW...
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU FELL FOR HER...


WHAT A JERK.
GO DIE IN A FIRE...






THIS IS HOW...

...EIKO SPENDS MOST OF HER DAYS.

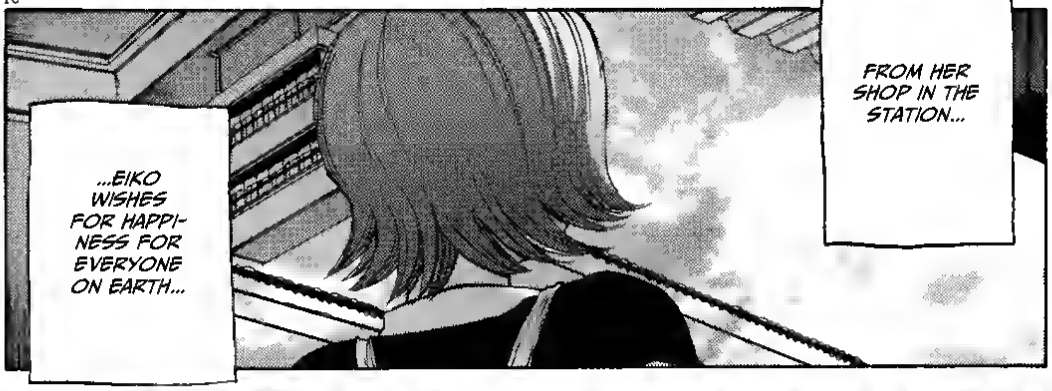
THEN IN THE EVENING SHE RETURNS TO HER SECRET BASE, WHICH COULD WITHSTAND A NUCLEAR ATTACK.
--where a dead baby was found in a cardboard box.
In response to the accused's sentence of two years imprisonment and three years probation, the family--
re you doing?
nce your father got
the hospital, he hasn't
een himself. My health
hasn't been so great lately,
either, so I'm thinking of
retiring. It would be
wonderful if you could
end us some more
I'd love to hear fro
Mom
THEN EIKO THINKS FOR A WHILE...
ふーん
むく
カチカチ

..AND THEN SHE CRIES A LITTLE.

G-GOOD MORNING, EIKO!
GOOD MORNING! ♡
SEEING YOUR SMILE REALLY DOES CHASE THE BLUES AWAY.
LIKE THE FACT THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REPAY SOME BAD DEBTS.
Ah!
PIERCING!!
GOOD LUCK. ♡

IT'S THE START OF A NEW DAY.

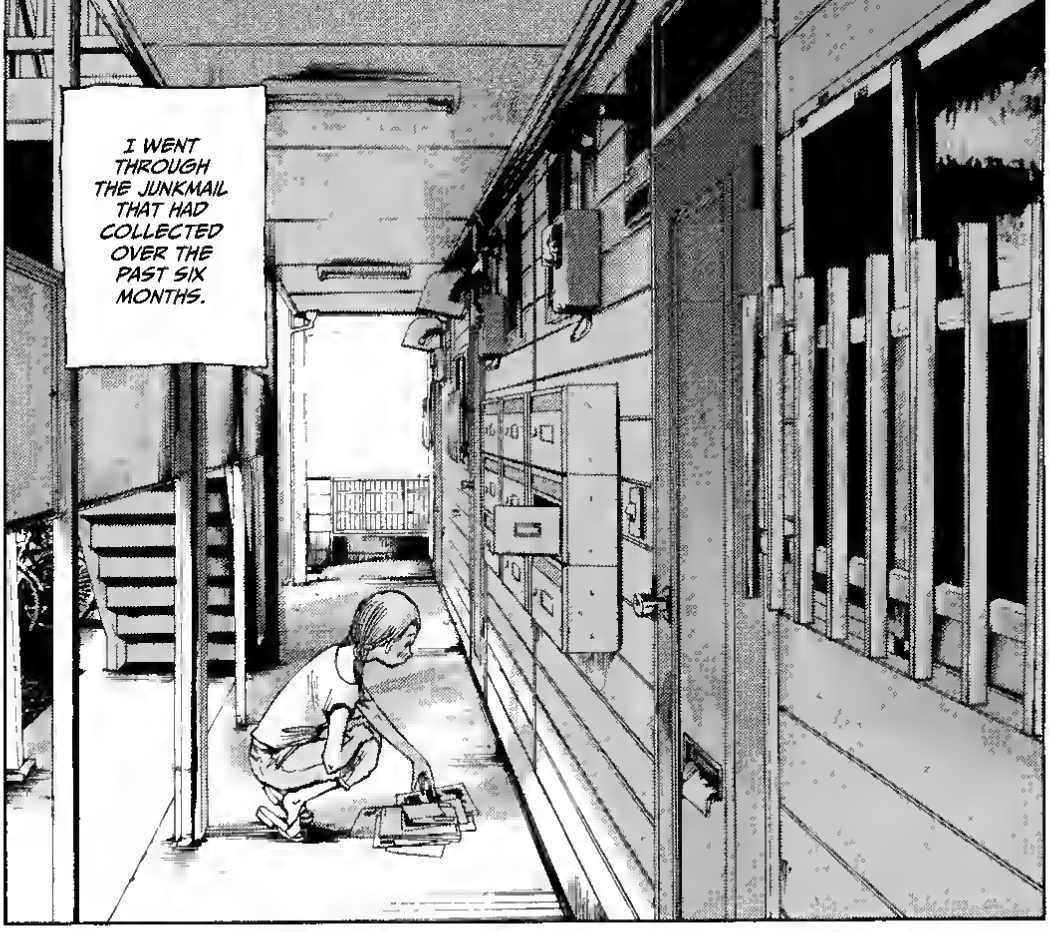
16

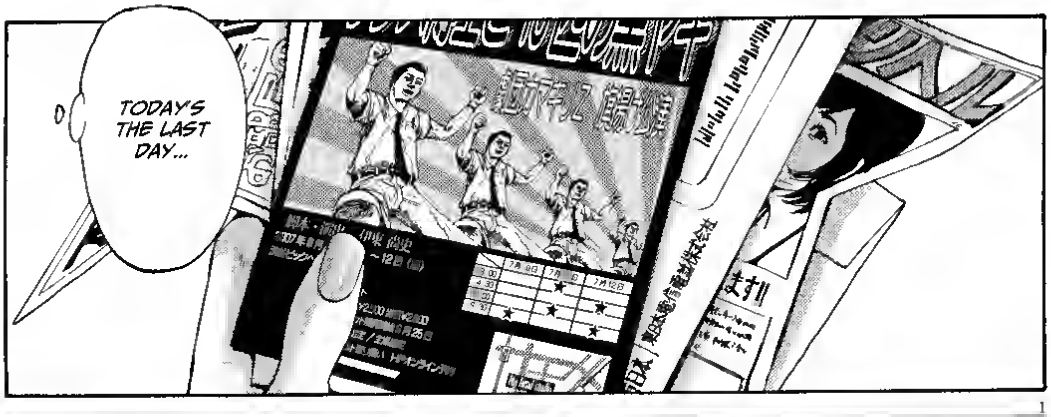

FROM HER SHOP IN THE STATION...
...EIKO WISHES FOR HAPPINESS FOR EVERYONE ON EARTH...

...AND FOR HERSELF... JUST A LITTLE MORE HAPPINESS THAN EVERYONE ELSE

How to Spend a Day Off

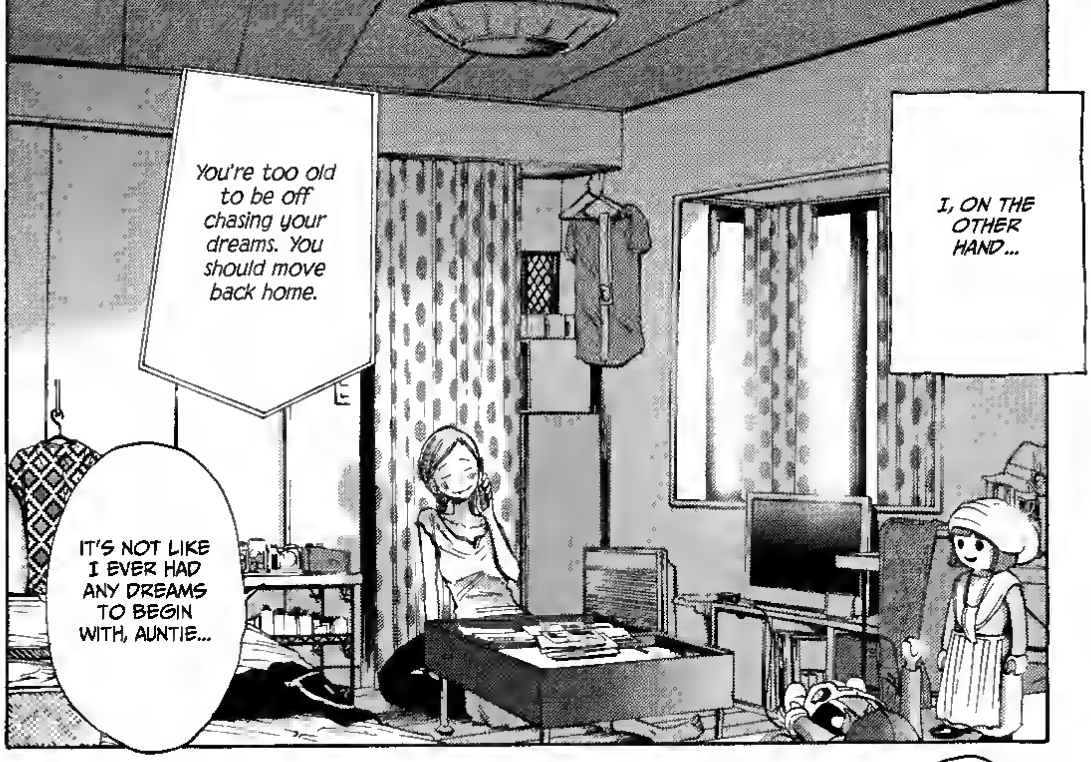
First published in *Big Comic Spirits Special Edition "Casual,"* Issue #16 (September 15, 2007).

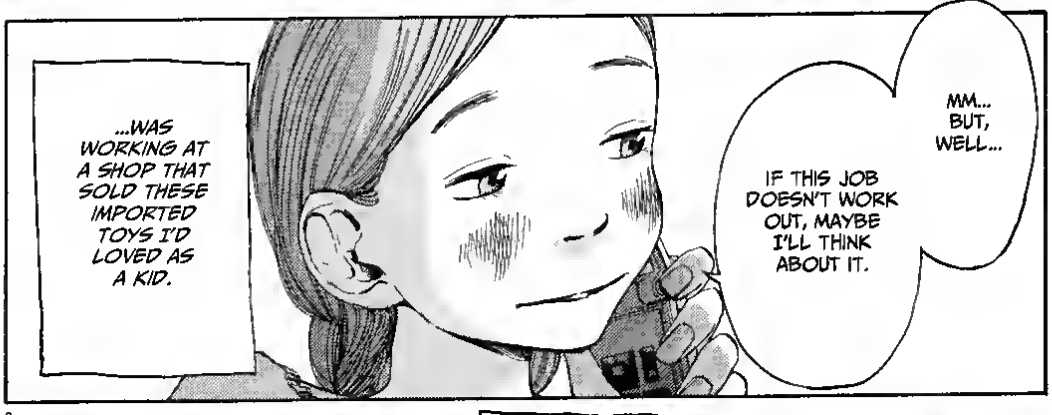




1

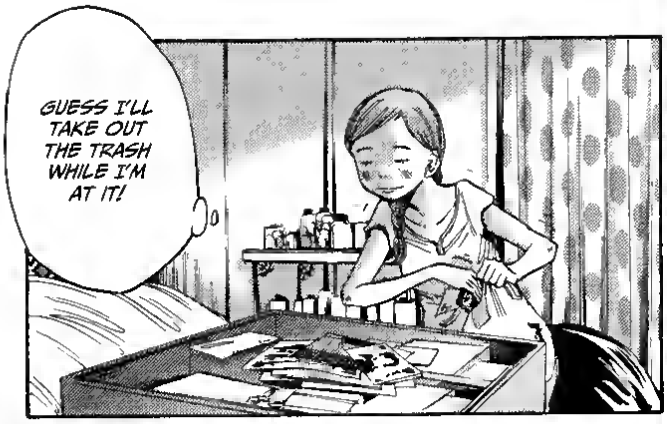
Apparently my ex is still a struggling actor.

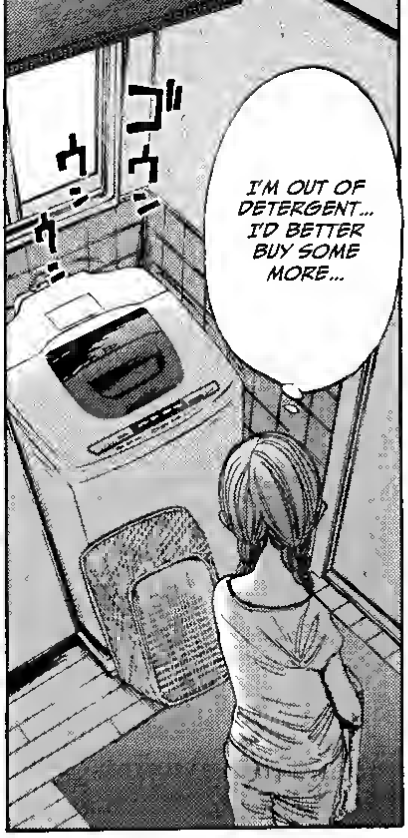

You're too old to be off chasing your dreams. You should move back home.
I, ON THE OTHER HAND...
IT'S NOT LIKE I EVER HAD ANY DREAMS TO BEGIN WITH, AUNTIE...

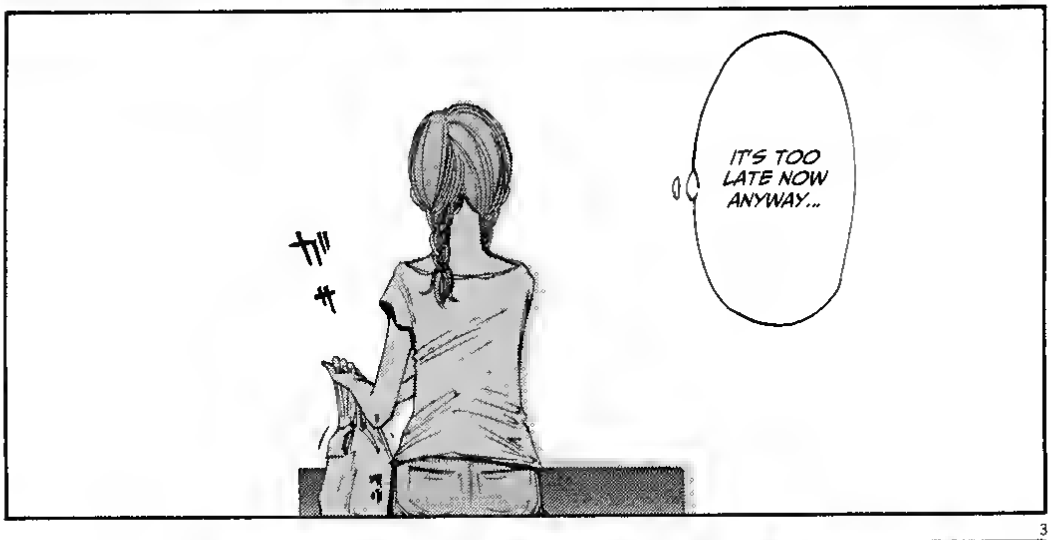

...WAS WORKING AT A SHOP THAT SOLD THESE IMPORTED TOYS I'D LOVED AS A KID.
IF THIS JOB DOESN'T WORK OUT, MAYBE I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
MM... BUT, WELL...

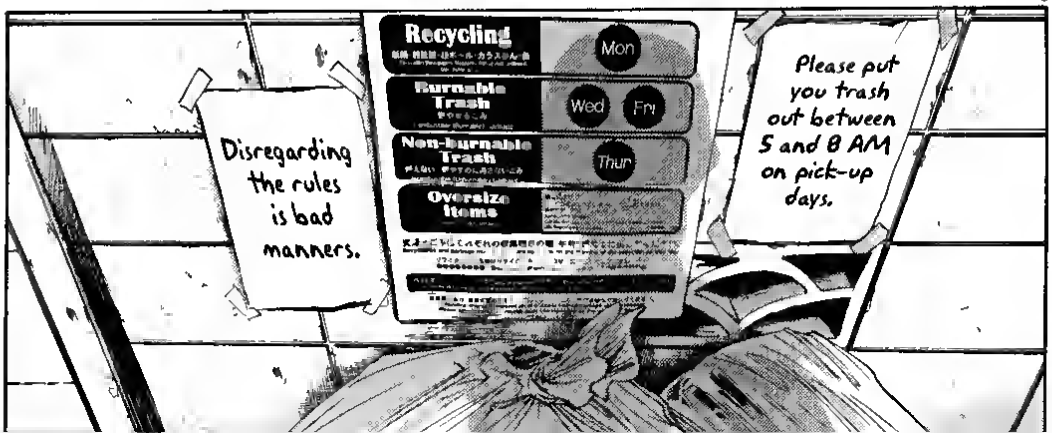
2

IT WOULD BE TOO SAD IF MY DREAMS NEVER CAME TRUE, SO I NEVER HAD ANY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE MAKES ME DEPRESSED, SO ON MY DAYS OFF, I JUST DO LAUNDRY.

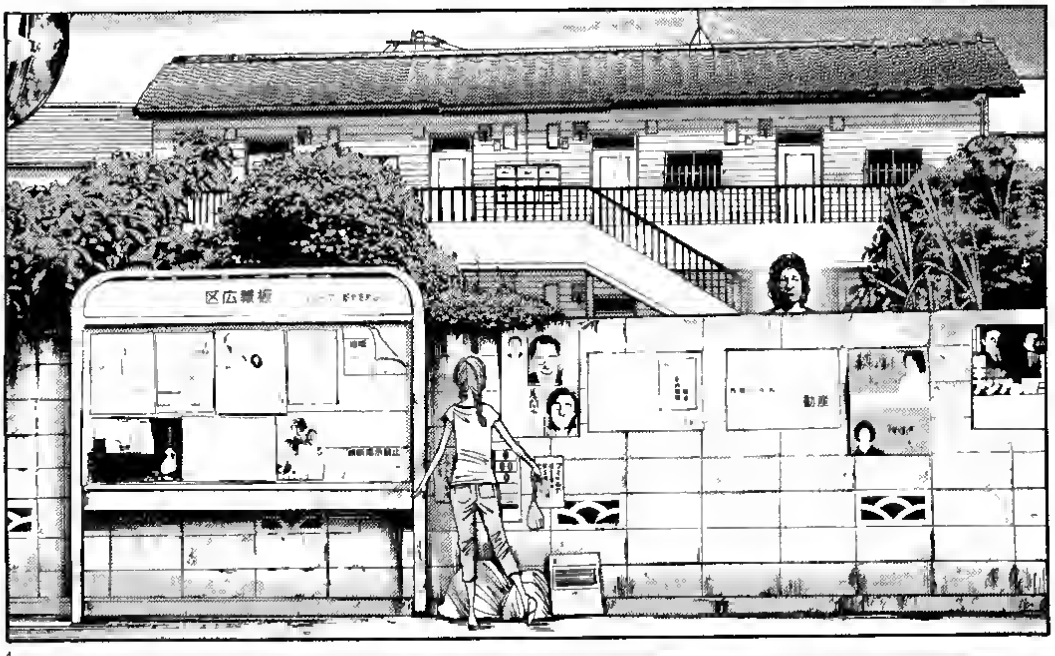

GUESS I'LL TAKE OUT THE TRASH WHILE I'M AT IT!


I'M OUT OF DETERGENT... I'D BETTER BUY SOME MORE...


IT'S TOO LATE NOW ANYWAY...


Disregarding the rules is bad manners.
Recycling
Mon
Burnable Trash
Wed
Fri
Non-burnable Trash
Thur
Oversize Items
Please put you trash out between 5 and 8 AM on pick-up days.

QUICK DROP-OFF!
Disregarding the rules is bad manners.
Recycling

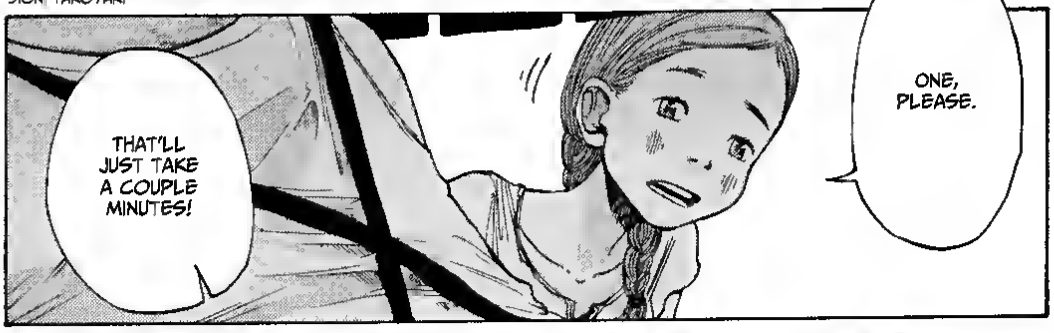

区広報板

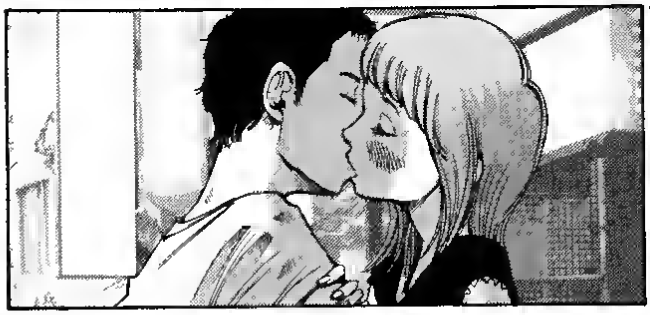
4

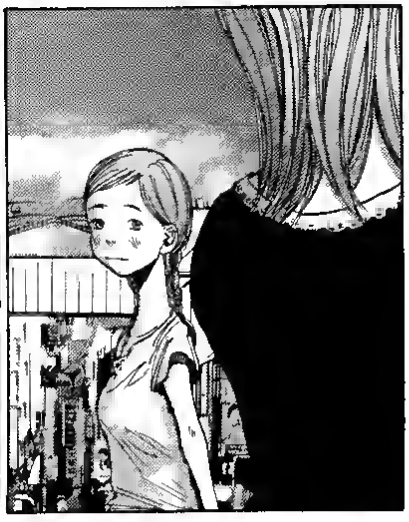
The landlady!
Eek!

Ack!

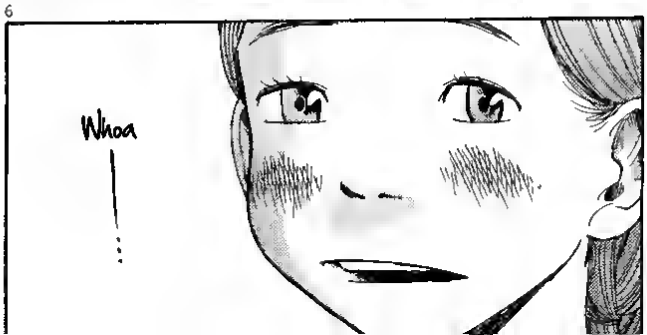
SIGN: TAKOYAKI

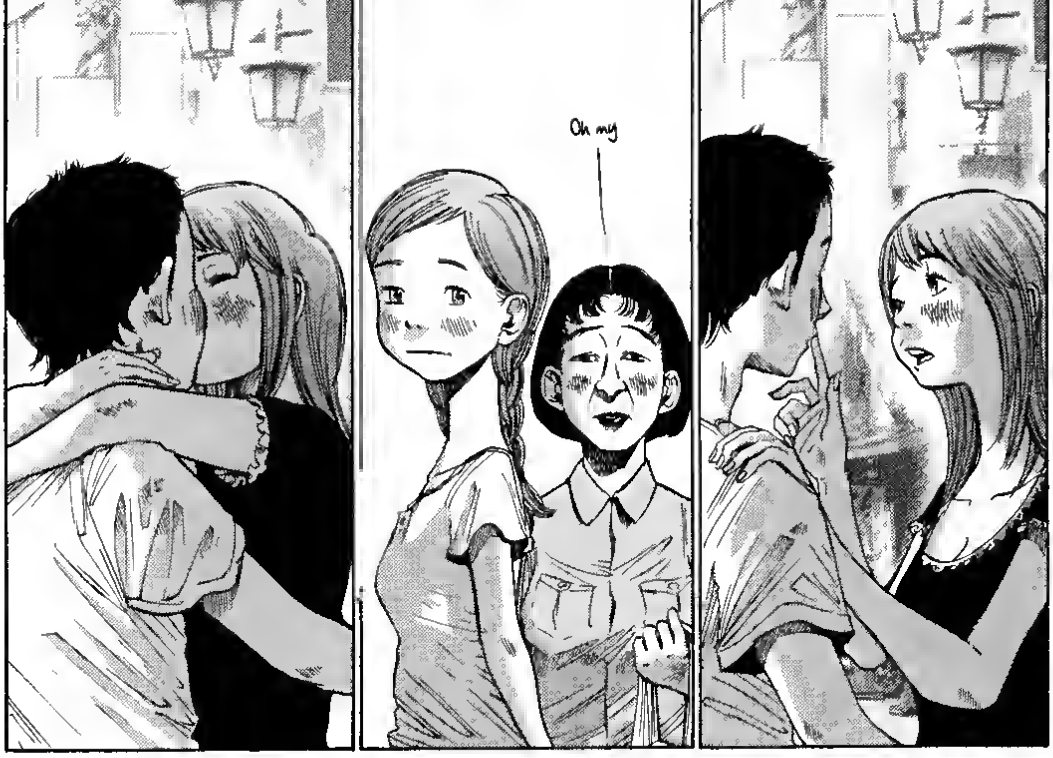


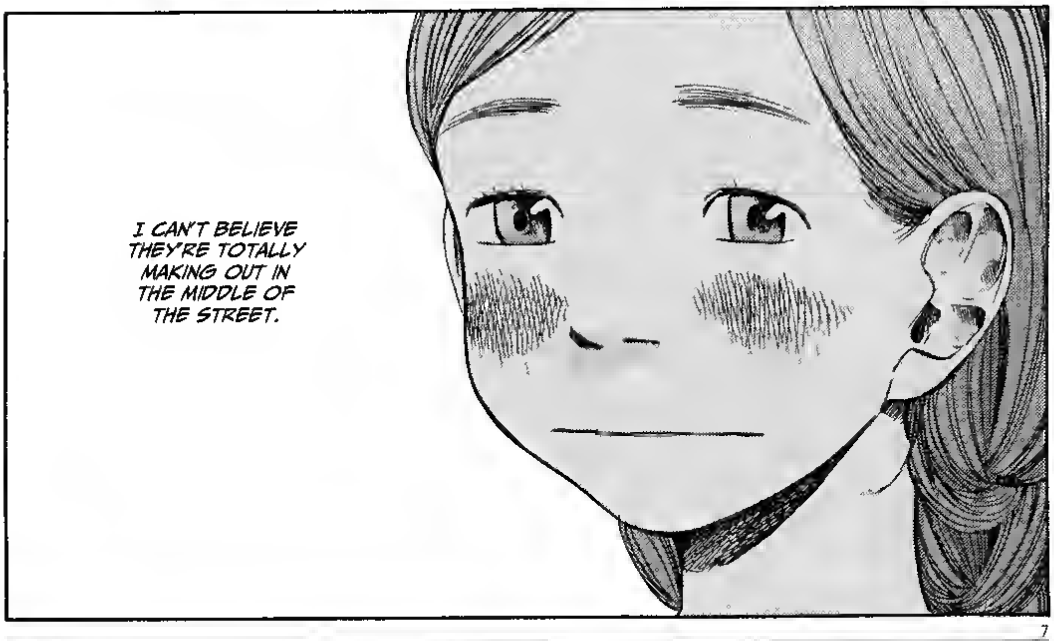




6







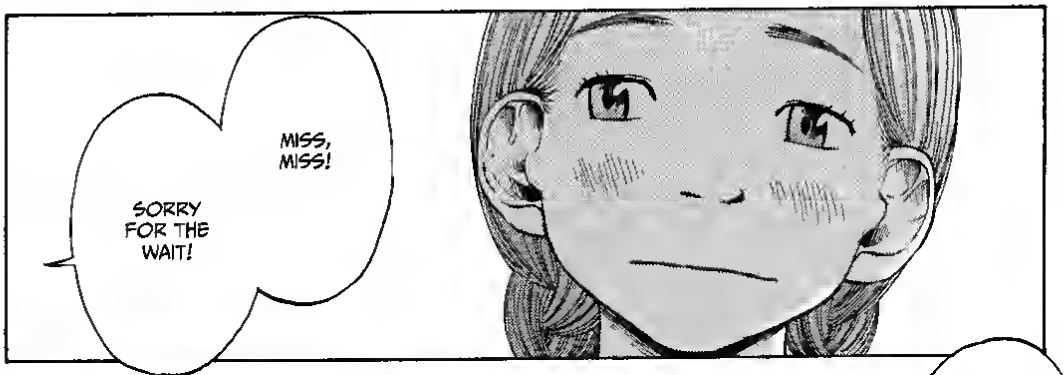
So bright everything else around them seems faded.

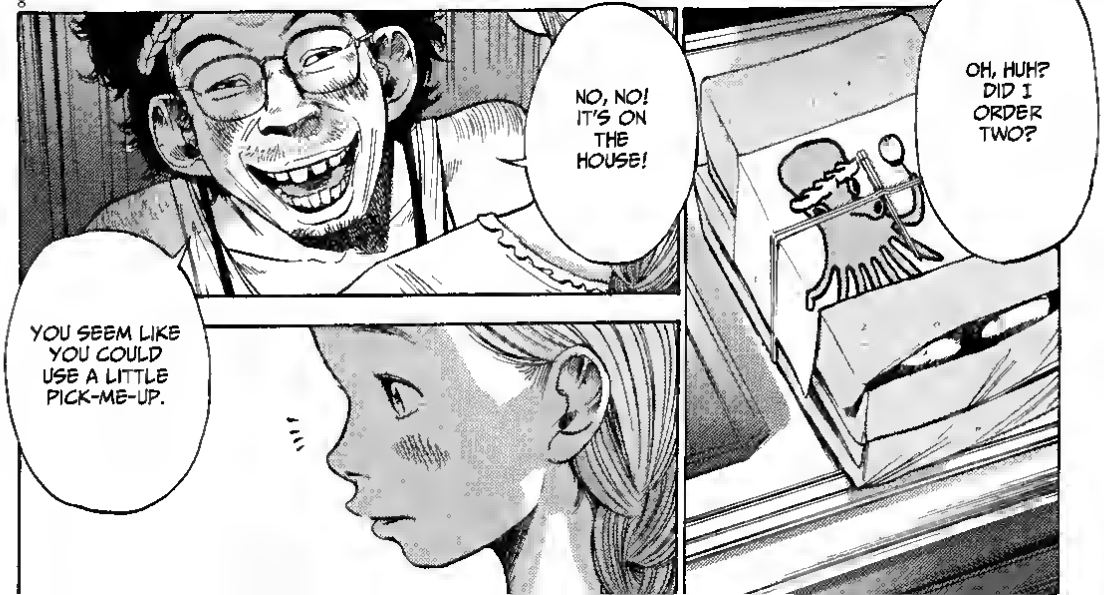
They're so vibrant.

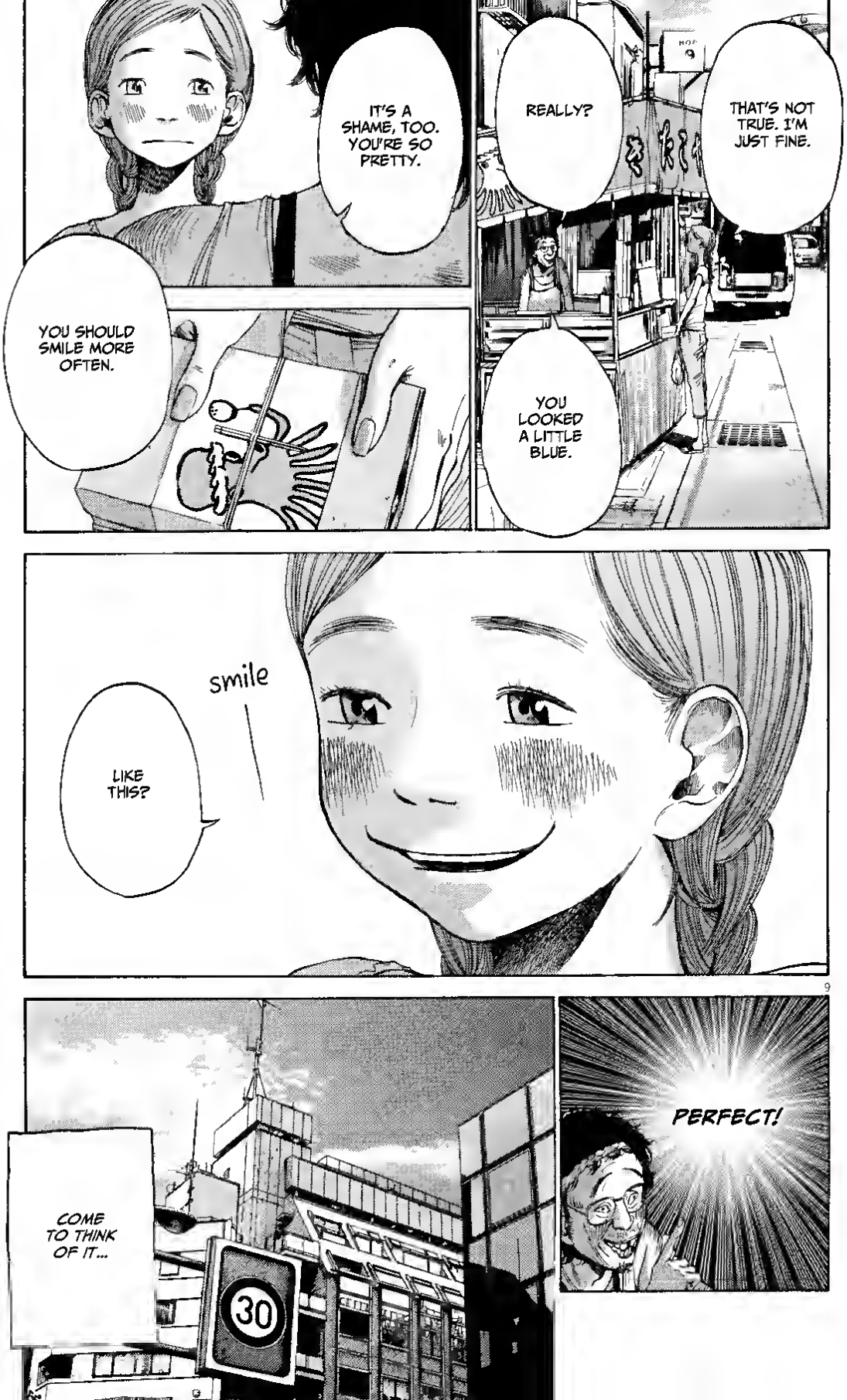
Youth is amazing.

Are they college students?

I KNOW I MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE THAT ONCE MYSELF...
...BUT NOW I'M JUST ANOTHER PART OF THE SCENERY.
たこやき

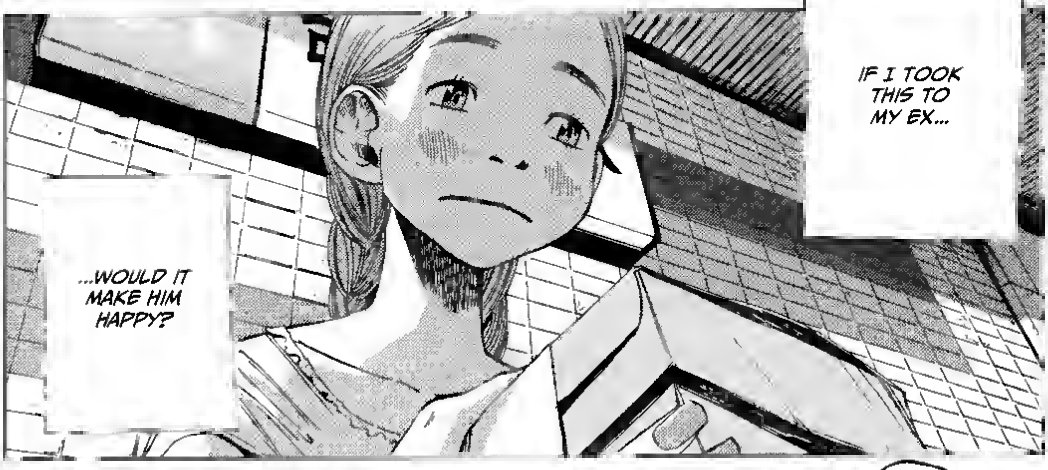

MISS, MISS!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT!

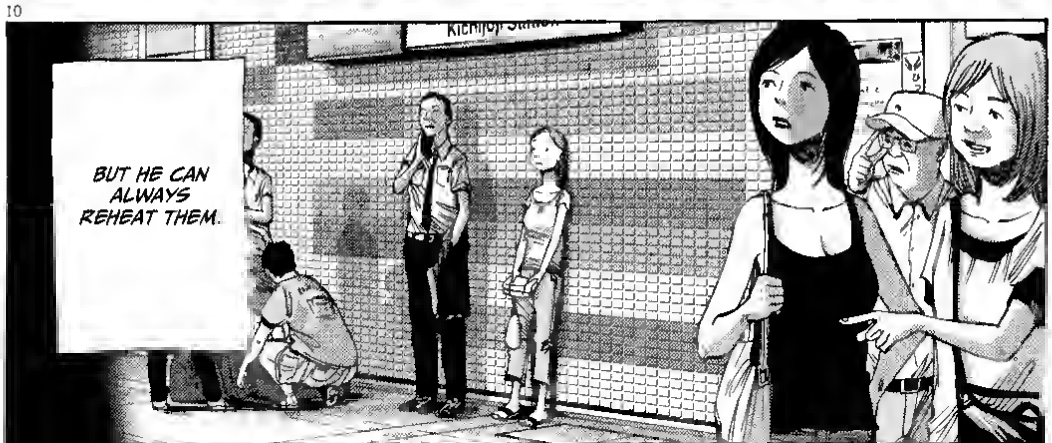

OH, HUH? DID I ORDER TWO?
NO, NO! IT'S ON THE HOUSE!
YOU SEEM LIKE YOU COULD USE A LITTLE PICK-ME-UP.


IT'S A SHAME, TOO. YOU'RE SO PRETTY.
YOU SHOULD SMILE MORE OFTEN.
REALLY?
THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'M JUST FINE.
YOU LOOKED A LITTLE BLUE.
smile
LIKE THIS?
COME TO THINK OF IT...
30
PERFECT!

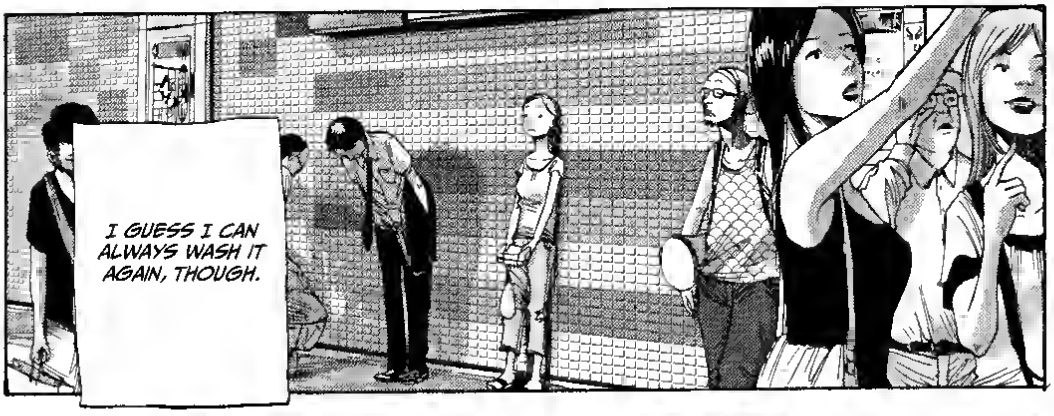
anyone's done anything that made me happy.

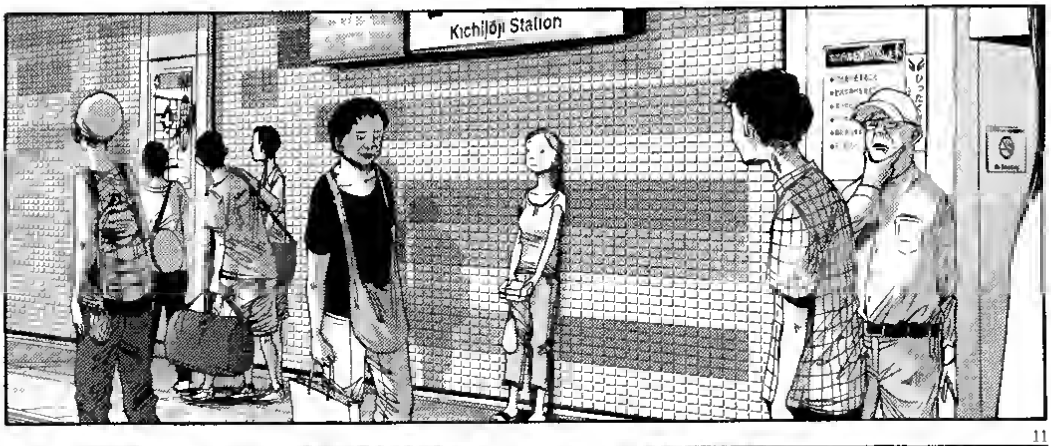
This may be the first time all month



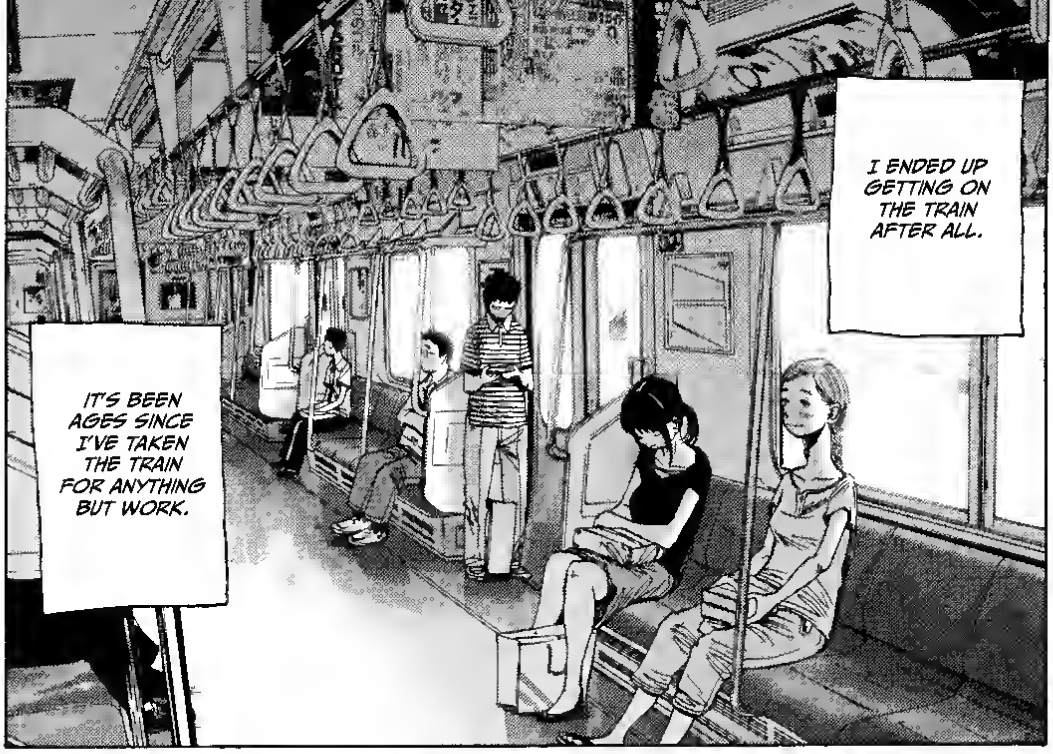


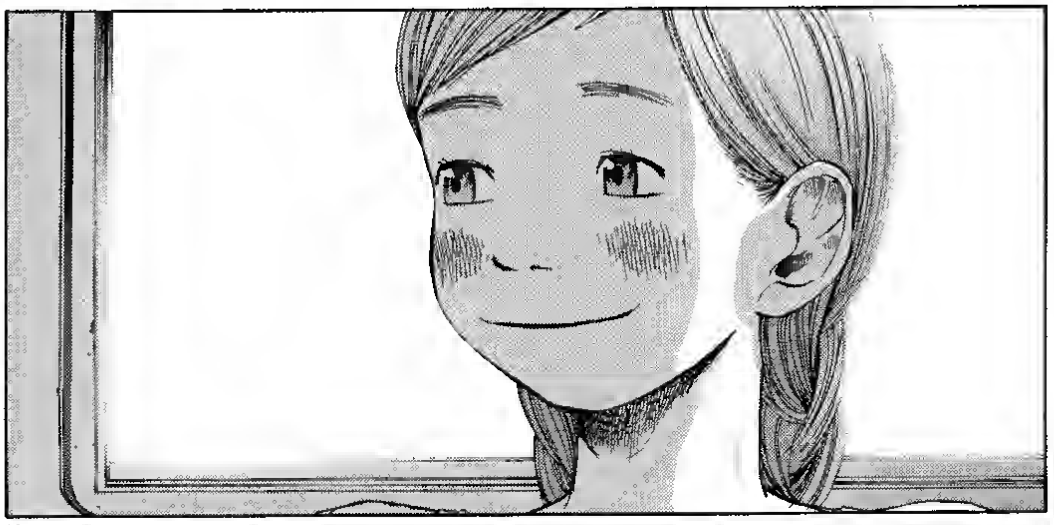
吉祥寺駅
Kichijōji Station
OH...
BUT IF I DON'T HANG THE LAUNDRY UP RIGHT AWAY, IT'LL START TO SMELL...


I GUESS I CAN ALWAYS WASH IT AGAIN, THOUGH.


Kichijōji Station

吉祥寺駅
Kichijōji Station



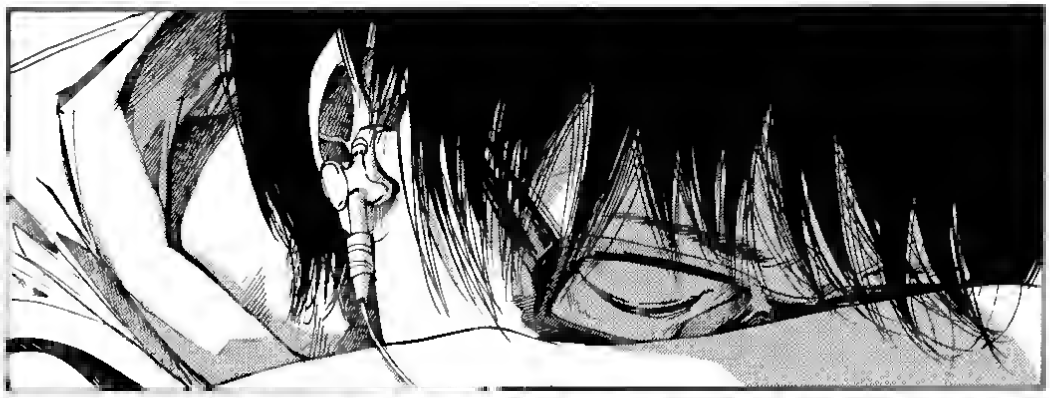


12

I guess it's OK to spend a day off like this once in a while, right?

17

First published in *Big Comic Spirits Special Edition "Casual,"* Issue #17 (February 15, 2008).

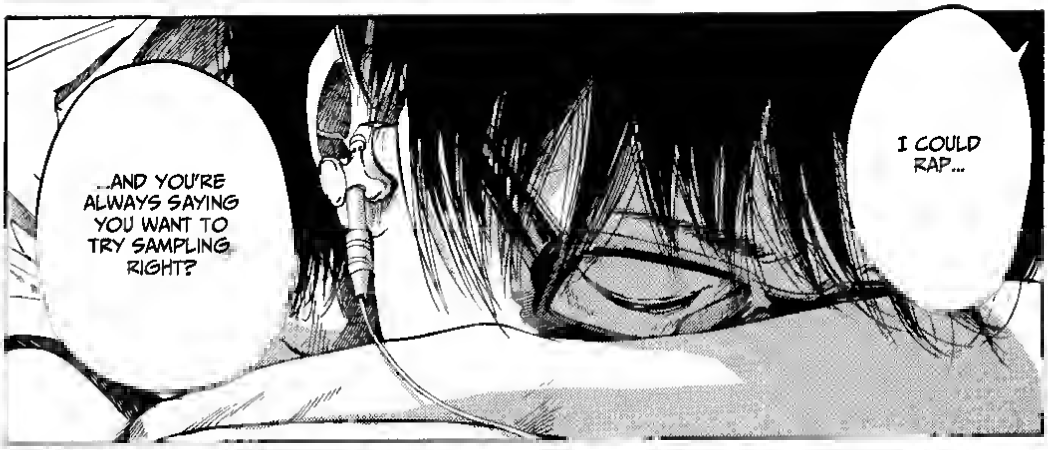


HEY, TAMURA,

WANNA DO A BAND FOR THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL NEXT MONTH?
I MEAN, NEITHER OF US CAN PLAY ANY INSTRUMENTS, BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF OTHER STUFF WE COULD DO.

I'm thinking about world peace and whether or not humanity can ever really live in harmony. I don't have time for you.

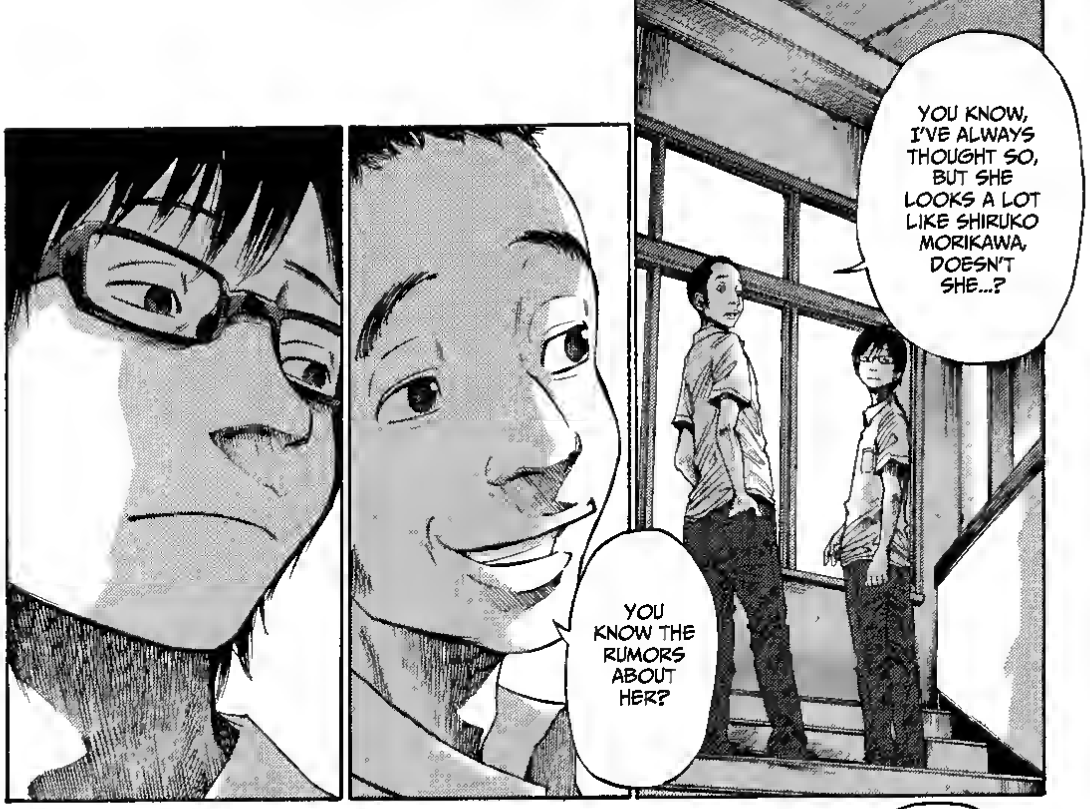
Shut up, man. Leave me alone.

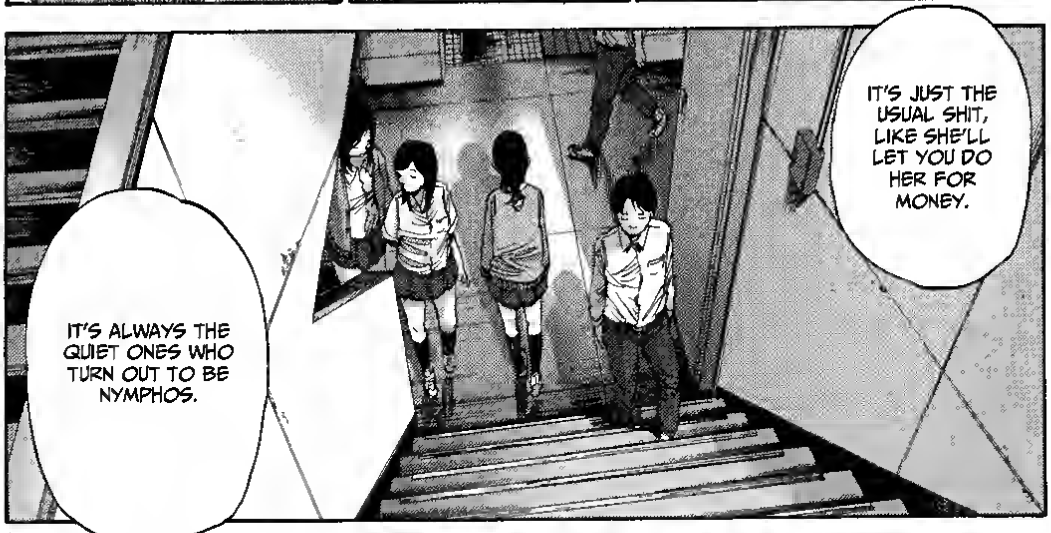


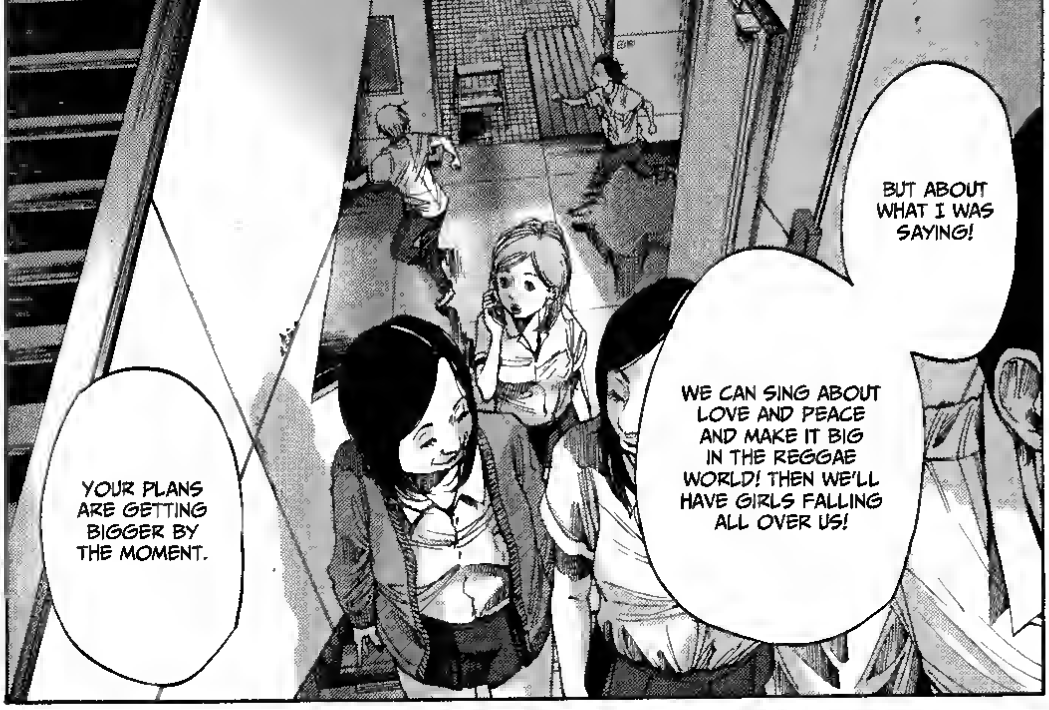
Even an idiot like me can tell there's no hope for the future.

Take a look at the TV or the Internet.

I GOT MY BROTHER'S COMPUTER INFECTED AND HE'S PISSED OFF AT ME NOW.
NAH, I COULDN'T.
ANYWAY, DID YOU BRING IT?
THE SHIRUKO MORIKAWA PORNO?
JEEZ, YOU SHOULD JUST FUCK OFF AND DIE, MAN.
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS WOULD GO DOWN IF YOU JUST DIED...?


YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT SO, BUT SHE LOOKS A LOT LIKE SHIRUKO MORIKAWA, DOESN'T SHE...?
YOU KNOW THE RUMORS ABOUT HER?


IT'S JUST THE USUAL SHIT, LIKE SHE'LL LET YOU DO HER FOR MONEY.
IT'S ALWAYS THE QUIET ONES WHO TURN OUT TO BE NYMPHOS.


BUT ABOUT WHAT I WAS SAYING!
WE CAN SING ABOUT LOVE AND PEACE AND MAKE IT BIG IN THE REGGAE WORLD! THEN WE'LL HAVE GIRLS FALLING ALL OVER US!
YOUR PLANS ARE GETTING BIGGER BY THE MOMENT.

The most pressing concern I have right now is how I can download porn without getting my computer infected.

Samplers have nothing to do with my life.

I'm sick of it.

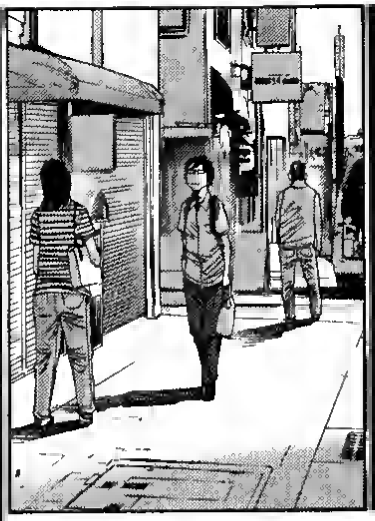
Enough of that.

6

NOTE *ORONAMEN Z* IS A FAKE PRODUCT NAME, BUT IT'S MEANT TO BE A VITAMIN/ENERGY DRINK.

DIE!
ARE YOU FUCKIN' RETARDED?
I COULD CLEAN YOU OUT RIGHT NOW.
NOT THAT I'M GOING TO, BUT...

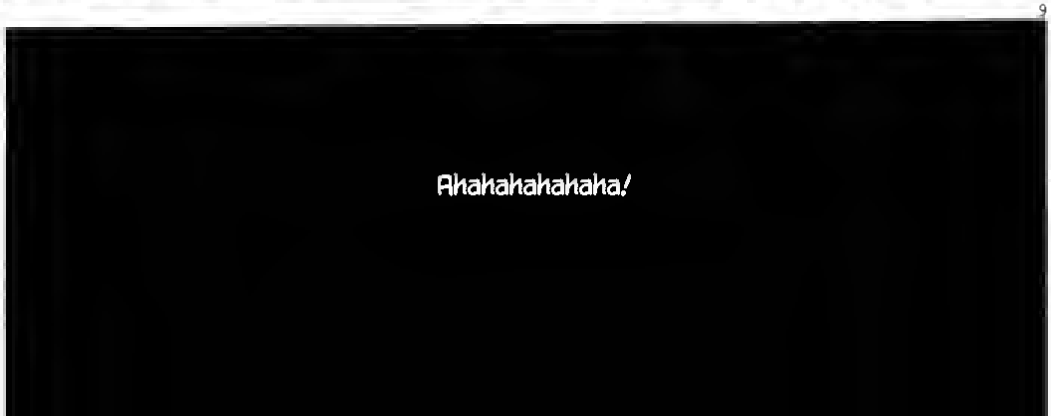
Huuh?



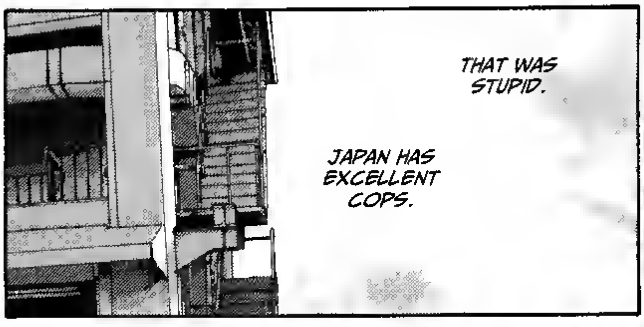
Huh?

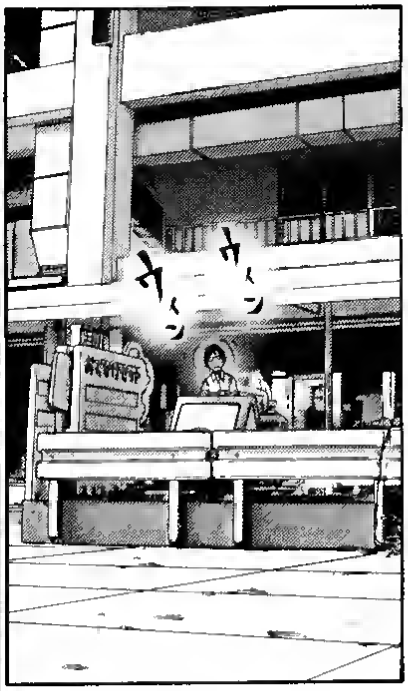
Huh?!

むぎとろ丼

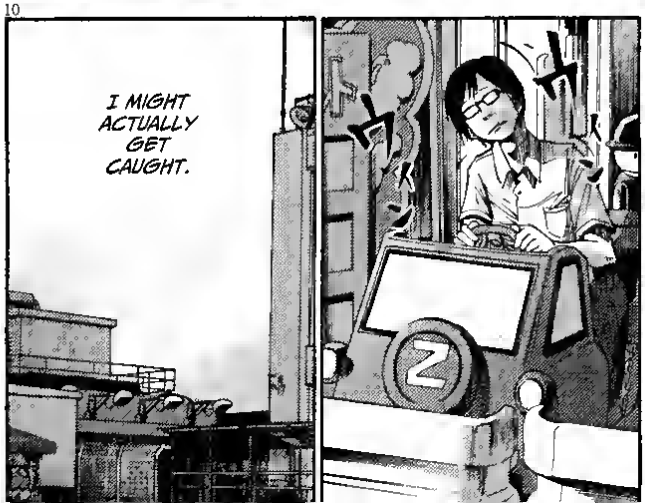

Ahahahahaha!

I DID IT.


THAT WAS STUPID.
JAPAN HAS EXCELLENT COPS.

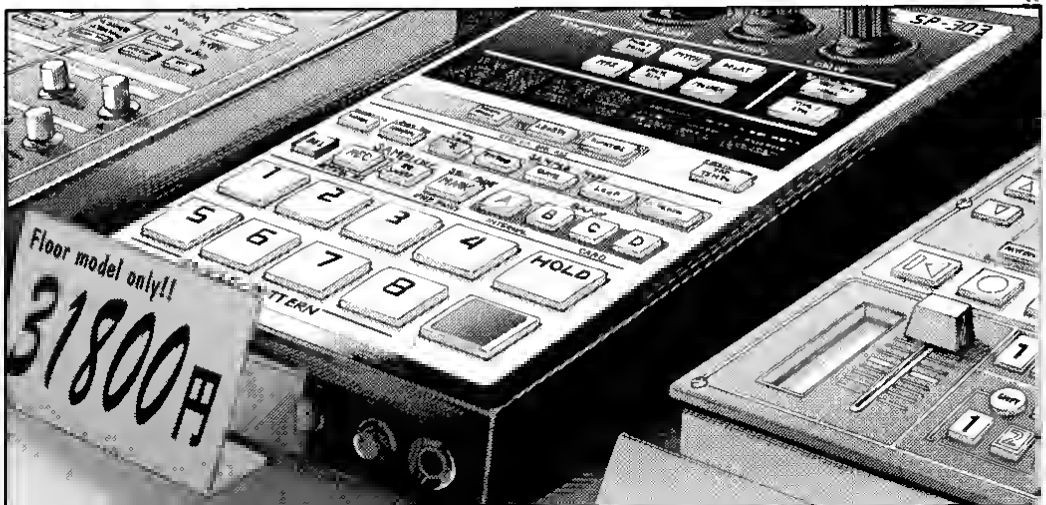


10


I MIGHT ACTUALLY GET CAUGHT.

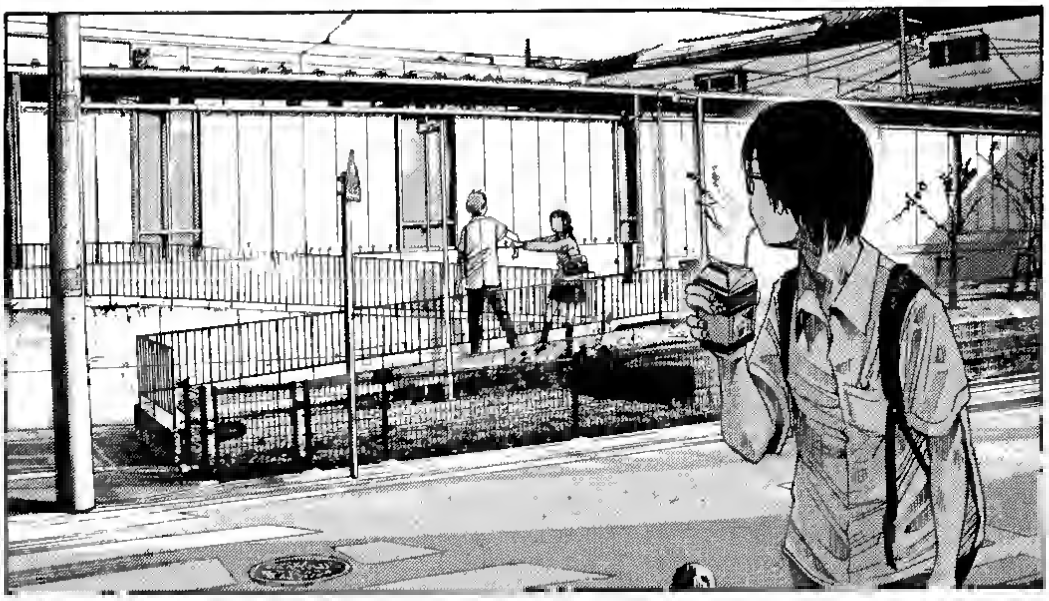
IF I DON'T HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH ANYONE ELSE, IT'LL BE LIKE I DON'T EVEN EXIST TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
MAYBE THAT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD.
MAYBE I'LL GET ARRESTED AND EXPELLED,
AND SPEND ALL MY TIME HOLED UP IN MY ROOM ON THE INTERNET LIKE A LAZY BUM.

YEAH, IT WOULD...

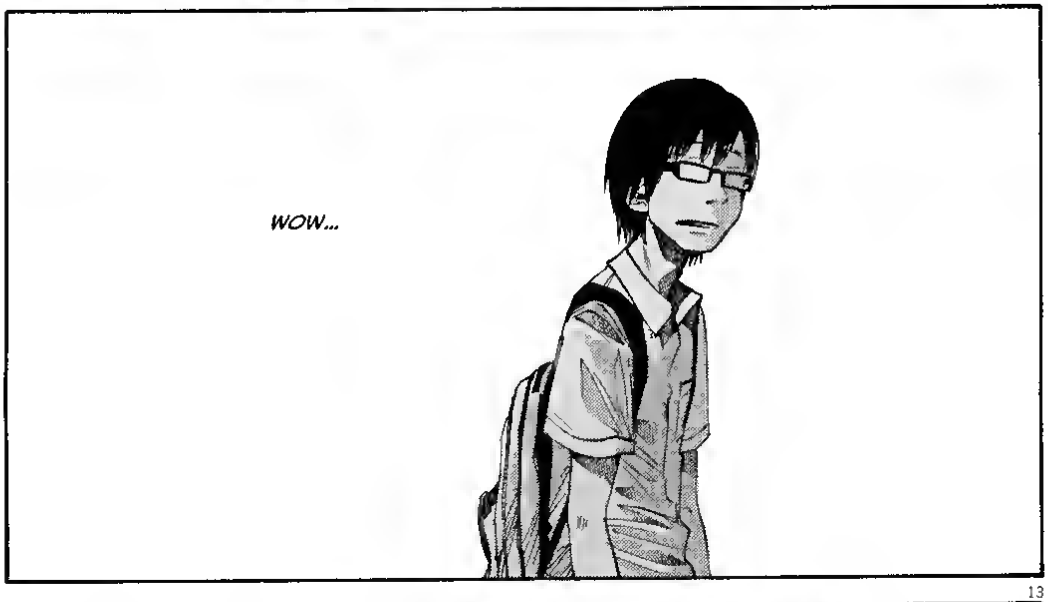

Floor model only!!
3180円
SP-303
HOLD

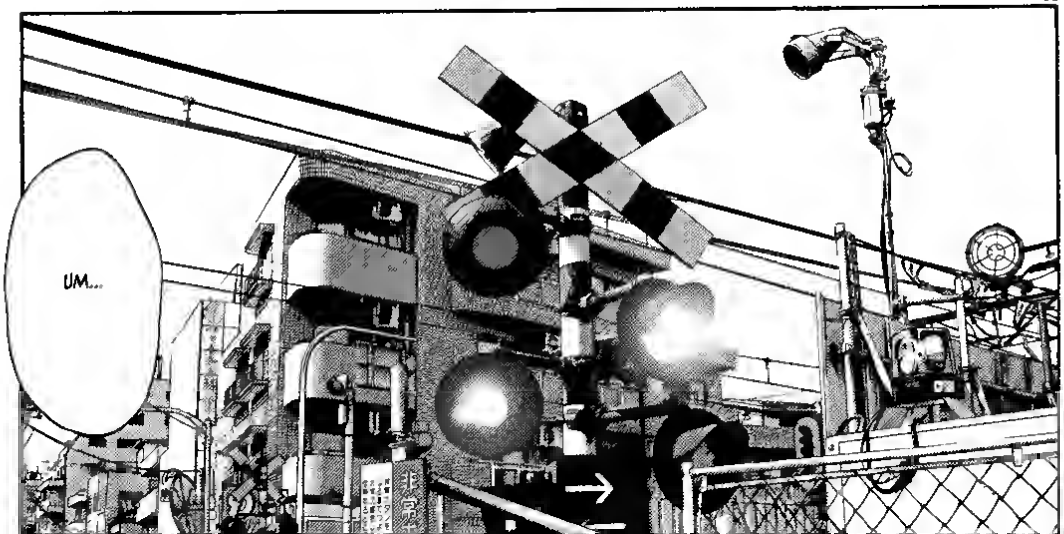
I'd have to be stupid to give it back.

What should I spend it on, then?

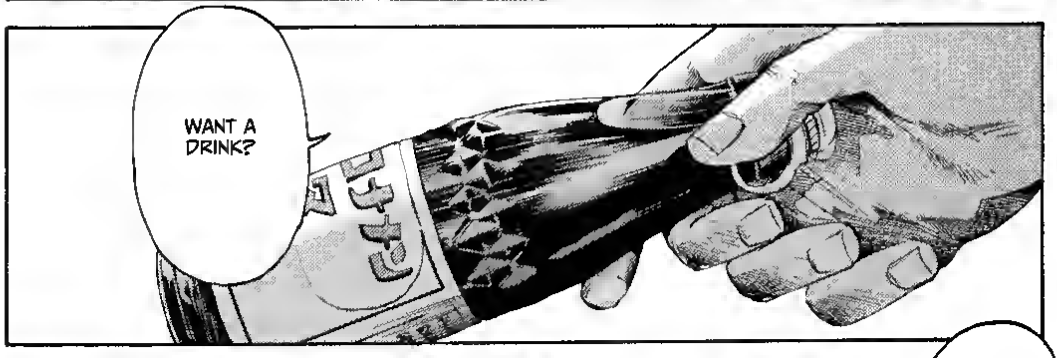


It's that girl who looks like Shiruko Morikawa.


WOW...


UM...

UH...
SORRY FOR BUTTING IN, BUT...
I SAW WHAT HAPPENED OVER THERE.


WANT A DRINK?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

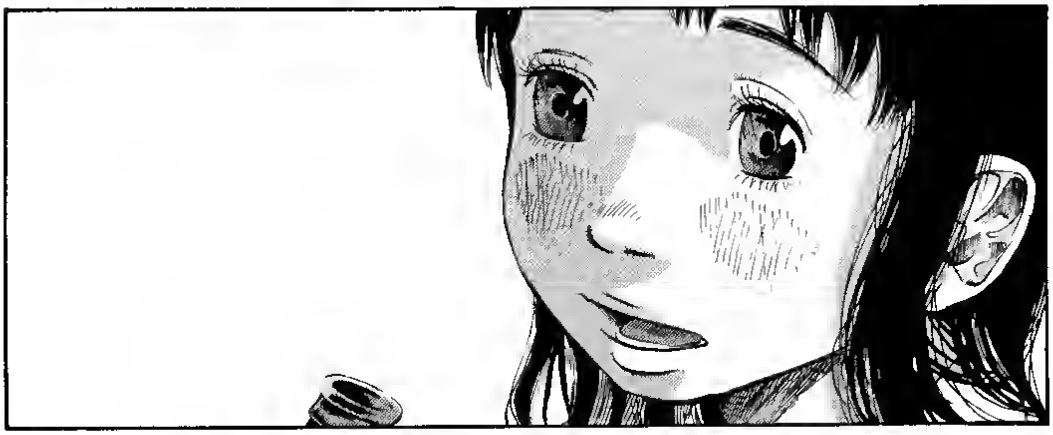
YOU OK? WAS THAT YOUR BOY-FRIEND OR SOMETHING?

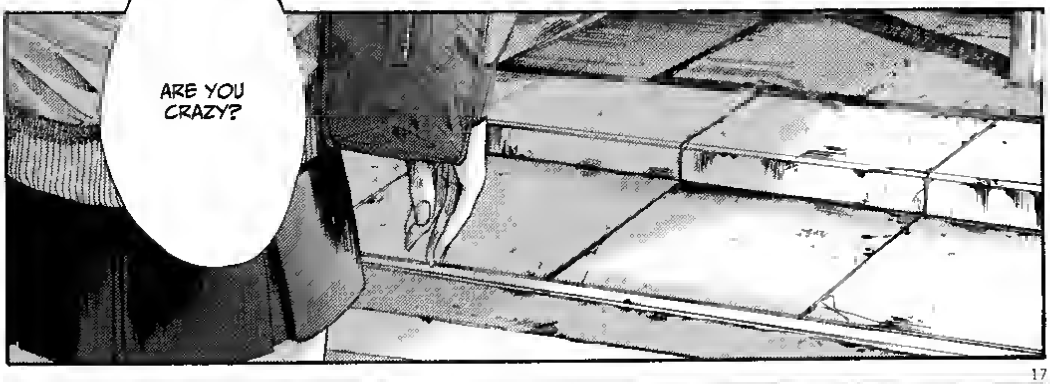
UH, I'M IN CLASS 3. MY NAME'S--
I KNOW.

SHE REALLY DOES LOOK LIKE HER.

SO, UM,
THIS MIGHT SEEM KINDA WEIRD AND OUT OF THE BLUE...
...BUT I MIGHT BE QUITTING SCHOOL SOON.

SO IF I GIVE YOU 30,000 YEN, WILL YOU LET ME FUCK YOU?

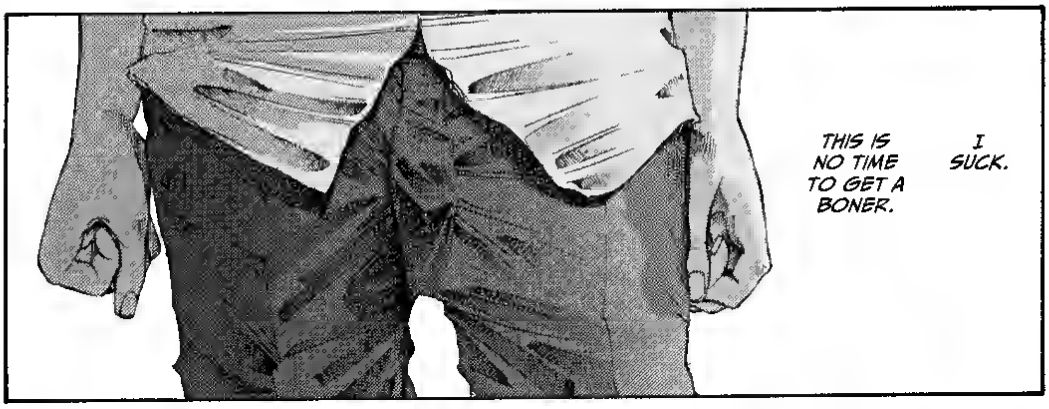




I really am fucked up.

Maybe...

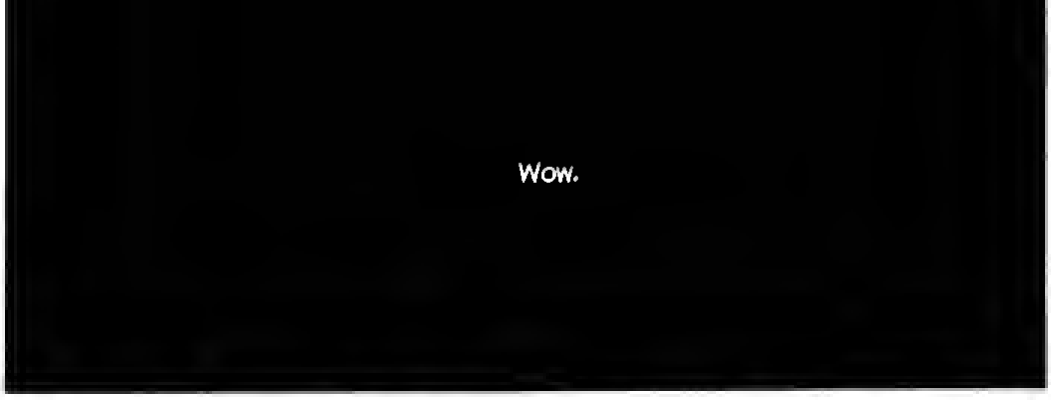
BUT I MUST HAVE BEEN GOING CRAZY LITTLE BY LITTLE.
I'M SURE OF IT.


THIS IS NO TIME TO GET A BONER.
I SUCK.

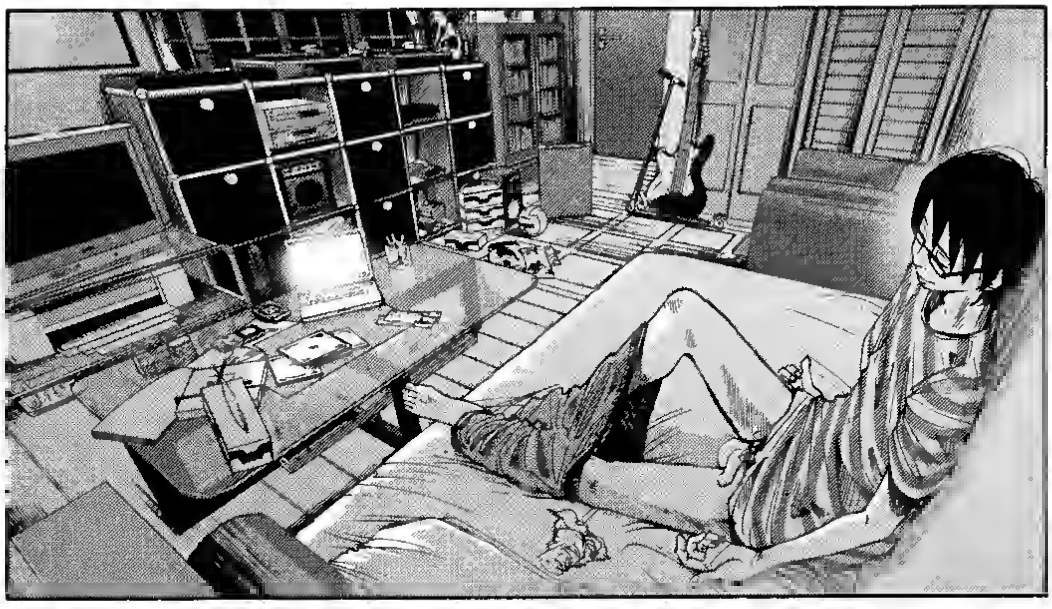
MASATOSHI! COME LOOK AT THE TV!

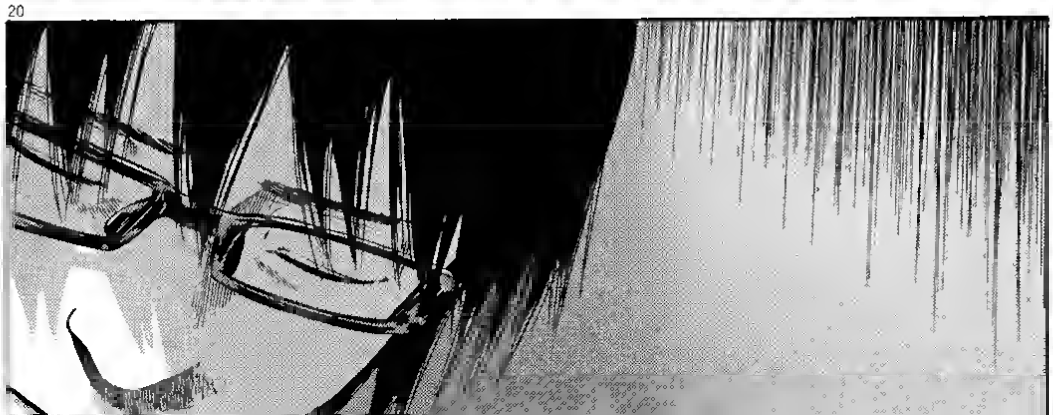
UM... I HAVE SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU...
At 6:00 PM today, three men in black entered a convenience store in XX...
...and stole about 30,000 yen from the register.
LOOK, THAT'S THE SHOP YOU ALWAYS GO TO, ISN'T IT?

CAPTION THE CLERK WHO SUSTAINED MINOR INJURIES

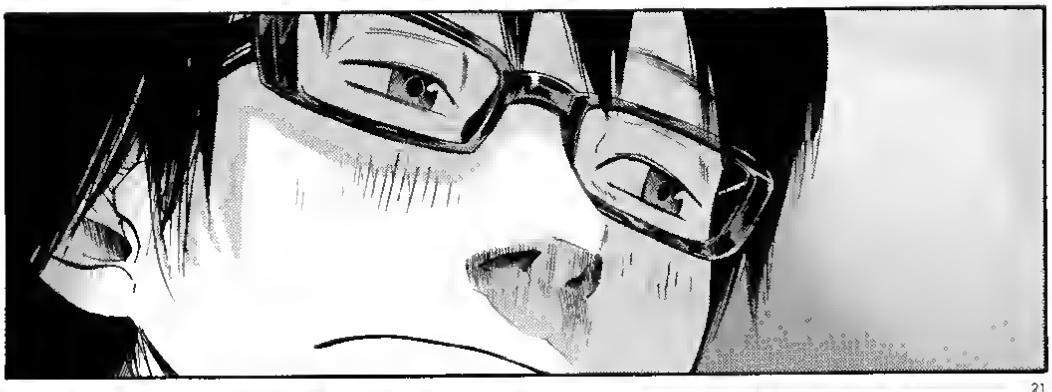

Wow.

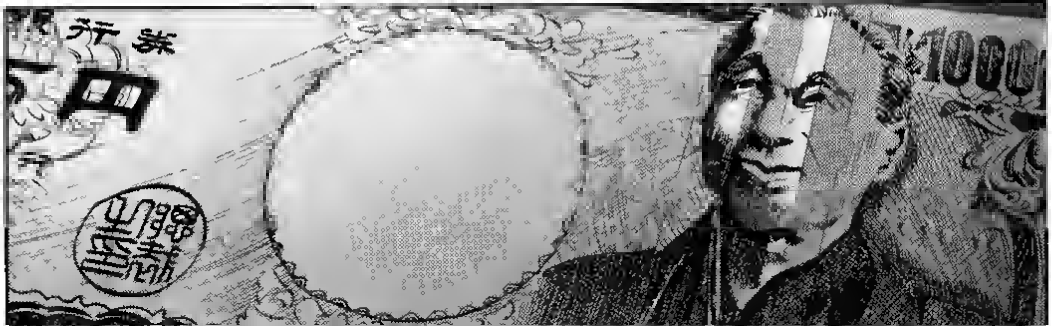
10000





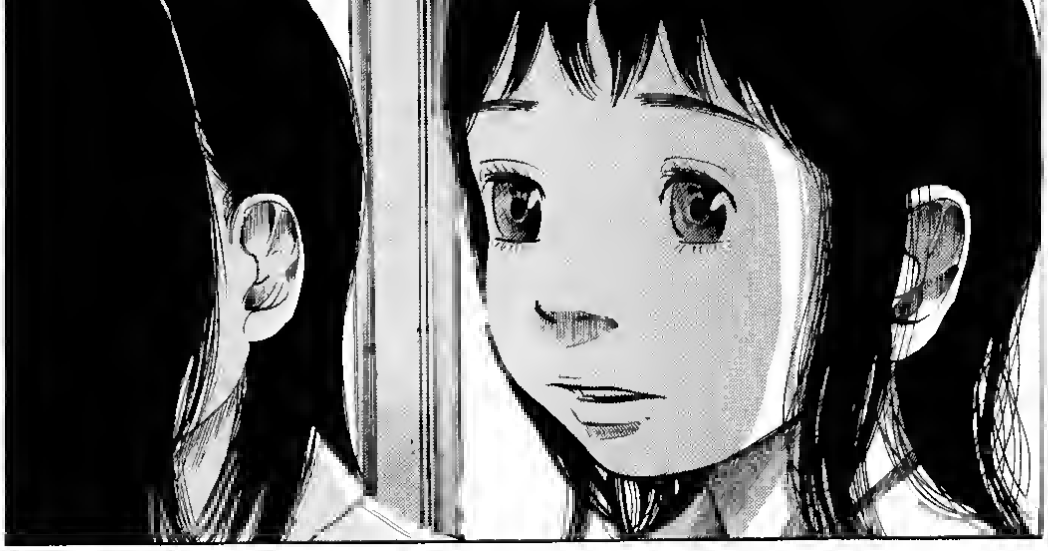
Shiruko Morikawa
"Golden Shower Express"
Shiruko Morikawa
"Best!!" 180 mins
Shiruko Morikawa
"Shaved Teacher!!"
60 mins

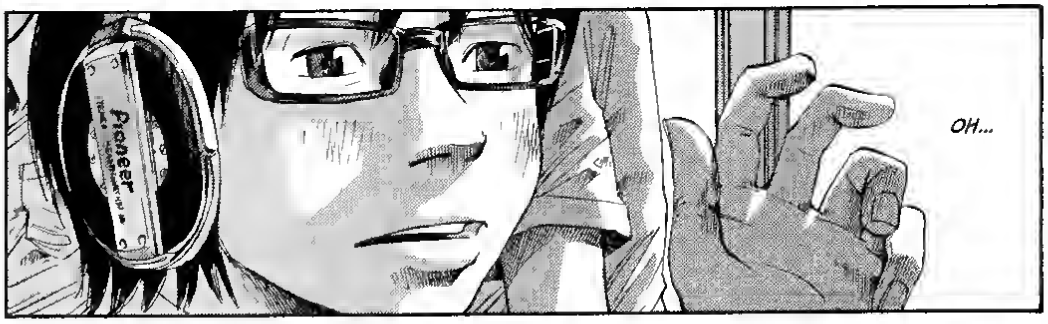



1000

22

BOX: SUPPORT A GREENER FUTURE





24

What a Wonderful World

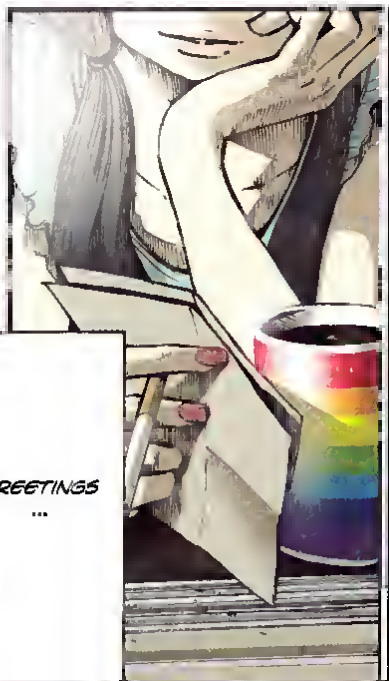
First published in *Sunday GX*, Issue of August 2008 (August 19, 2008).

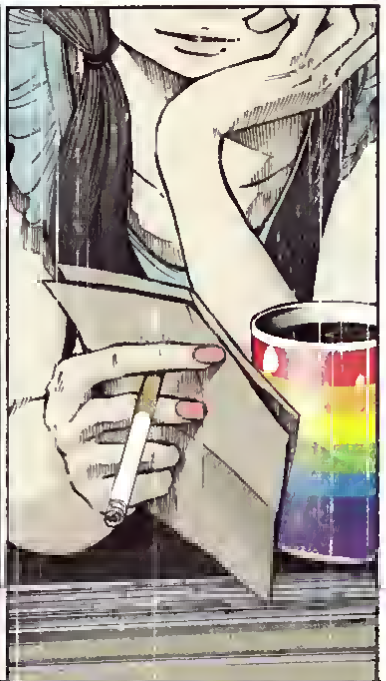
There are plenty of things you don't need to know in order to live.

But if growing up means knowing them, then I am definitely grown up.

At the very least, I am no longer the child who once dreamed of crossing the rainbow.

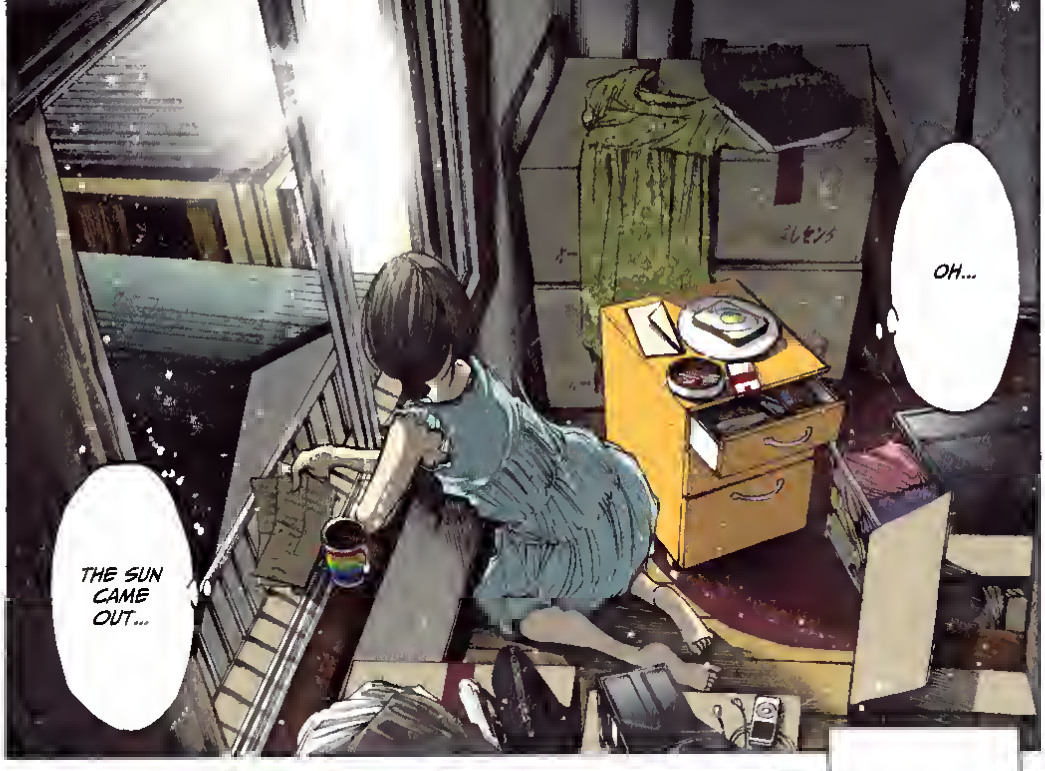
As I was packing up everything to move, I found a letter way, way in the back of my desk drawer.

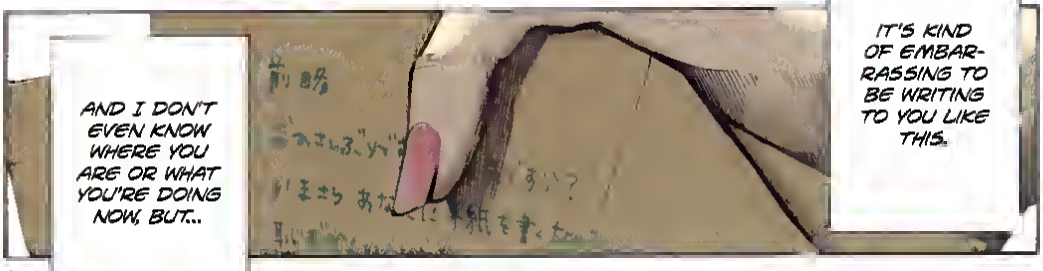


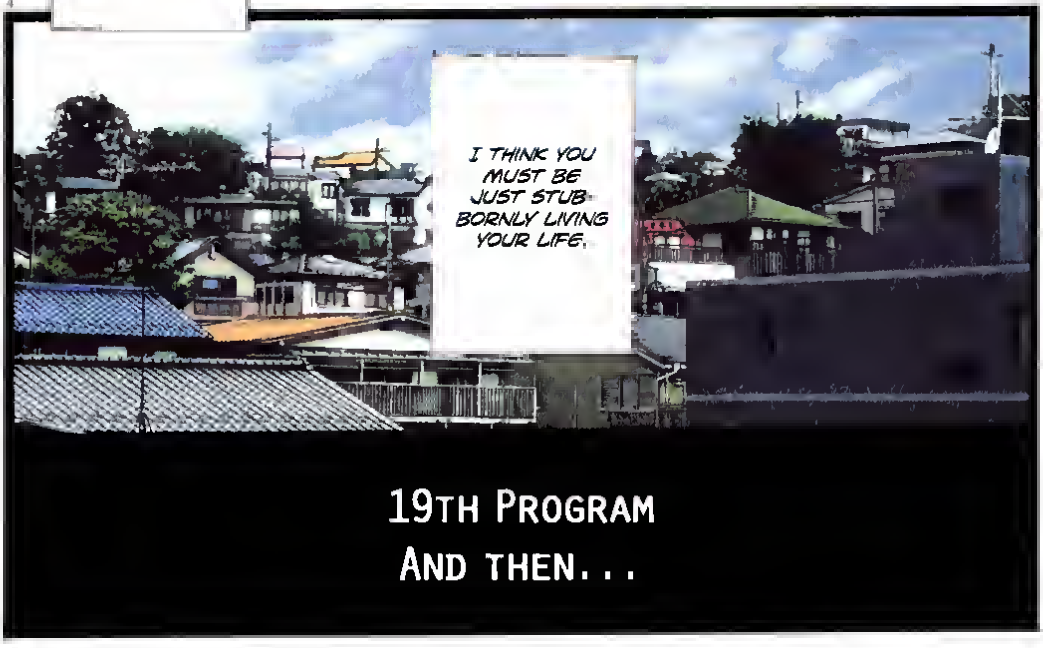


GREETINGS
...

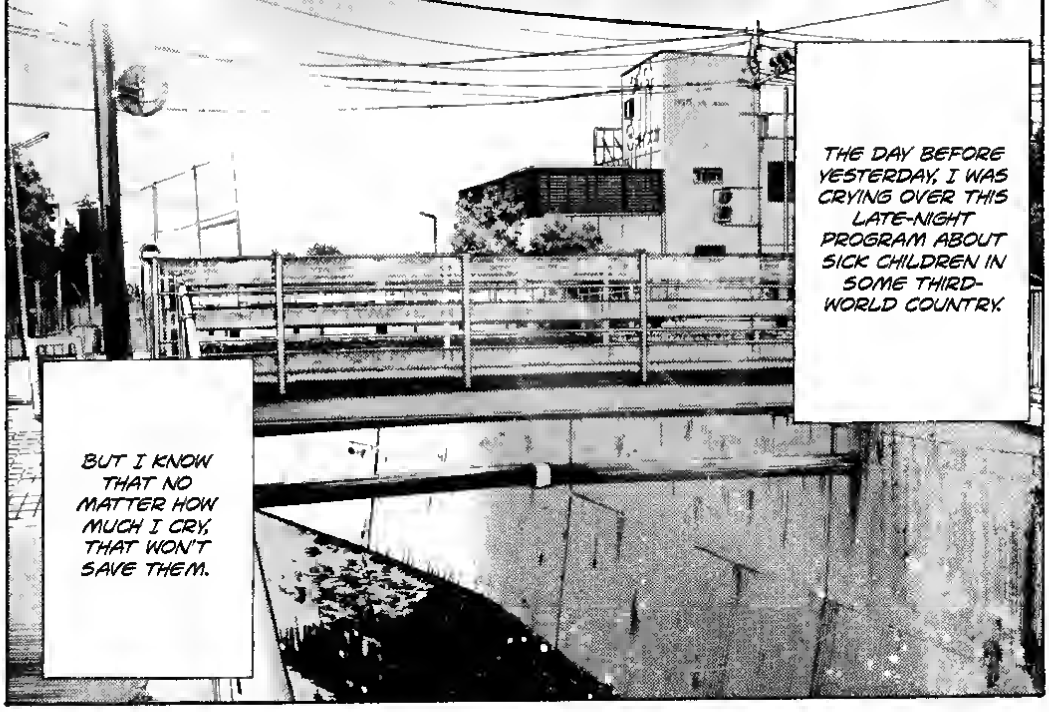
HOW ARE YOU?
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

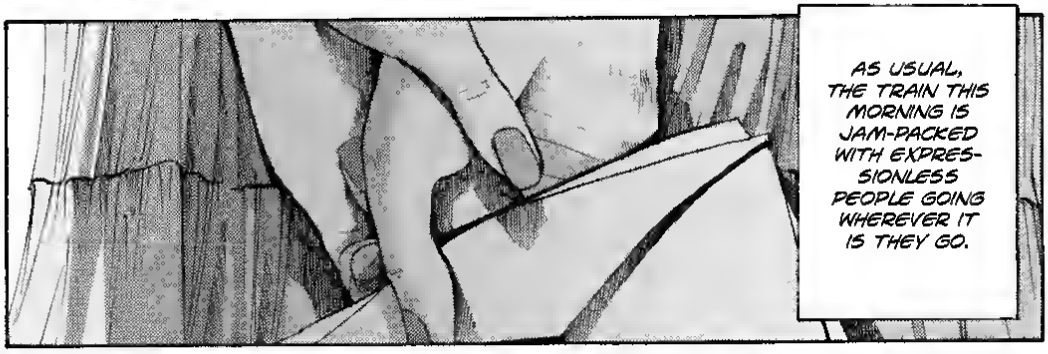

OH...
THE SUN CAME OUT...


IT'S KIND OF EMBARRASSING TO BE WRITING TO YOU LIKE THIS.
AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW, BUT...

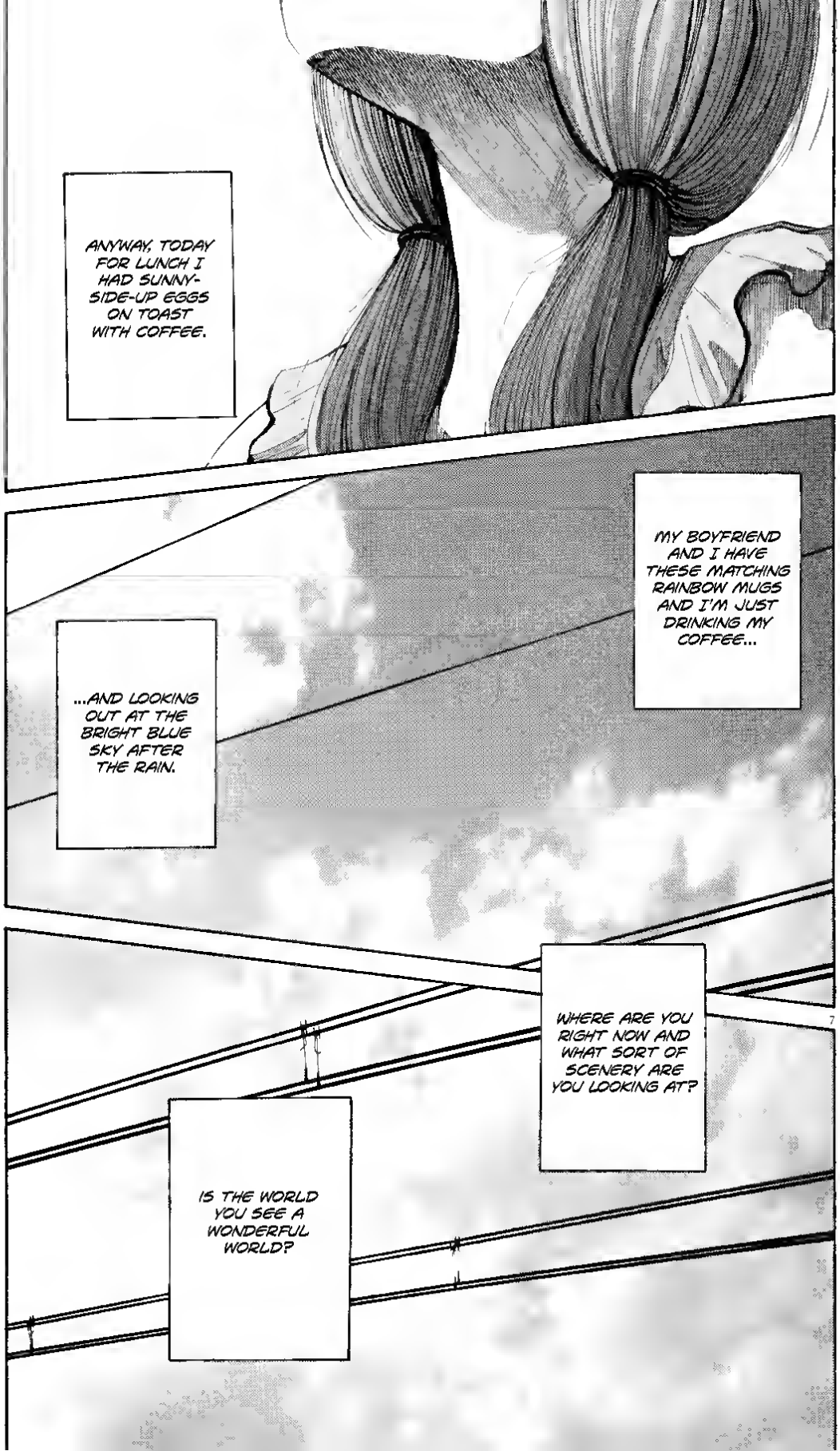

I THINK YOU MUST BE JUST STUBBORNLY LIVING YOUR LIFE.
19TH PROGRAM
AND THEN...

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE CONTRARY AND A LITTLE PESSIMISTIC,
AND YOU ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE THINKING DEEP THOUGHTS, BUT IN REALITY YOU WERE JUST EMPTY.
AND MAYBE I'M A LITTLE WORRIED THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE BECOME A REALLY BORING SORT OF PERSON.
5
GEE, THANKS A LOT.
BUT ANYWAY, THIS MORNING ON THE NEWS THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT THAT HOLLYWOOD ACTOR YOU LIKE COMING TO JAPAN.
(WHICH IS KIND OF RIDICULOUS, BECAUSE JUST LAST NIGHT THEY WOULDN'T STOP TALKING ABOUT THIS HIGH SCHOOL KID WHO KILLED HIS PARENTS AND LITTLE SISTER.)


THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, I WAS CRYING OVER THIS LATE-NIGHT PROGRAM ABOUT SICK CHILDREN IN SOME THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY.
BUT I KNOW THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I CRY, THAT WON'T SAVE THEM.


AS USUAL, THE TRAIN THIS MORNING IS JAM-PACKED WITH EXPRES-SIONLESS PEOPLE GOING WHEREVER IT IS THEY GO.

自転車を除く
一方通行
WILL I BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE SOMEDAY?


ANYWAY, TODAY FOR LUNCH I HAD SUNNY-SIDE-UP EGGS ON TOAST WITH COFFEE.
MY BOYFRIEND AND I HAVE THESE MATCHING RAINBOW MUGS AND I'M JUST DRINKING MY COFFEE...
...AND LOOKING OUT AT THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY AFTER THE RAIN.
WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW AND WHAT SORT OF SCENERY ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
IS THE WORLD YOU SEE A WONDERFUL WORLD?

about five years ago.

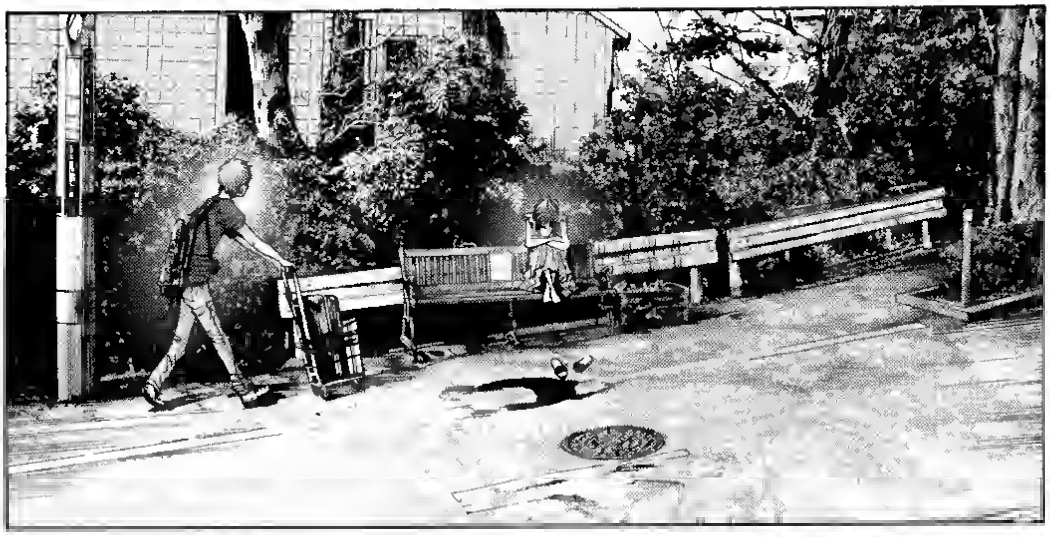
I wrote this letter to myself back when I was still in school,

Though I can't even remember how I felt when I wrote this embarrassing letter.

and today's just another ordinary day with a lot of people laughing and a lot of people crying.

the world's not as bad or as good as I'd hoped back then,

Anyway,

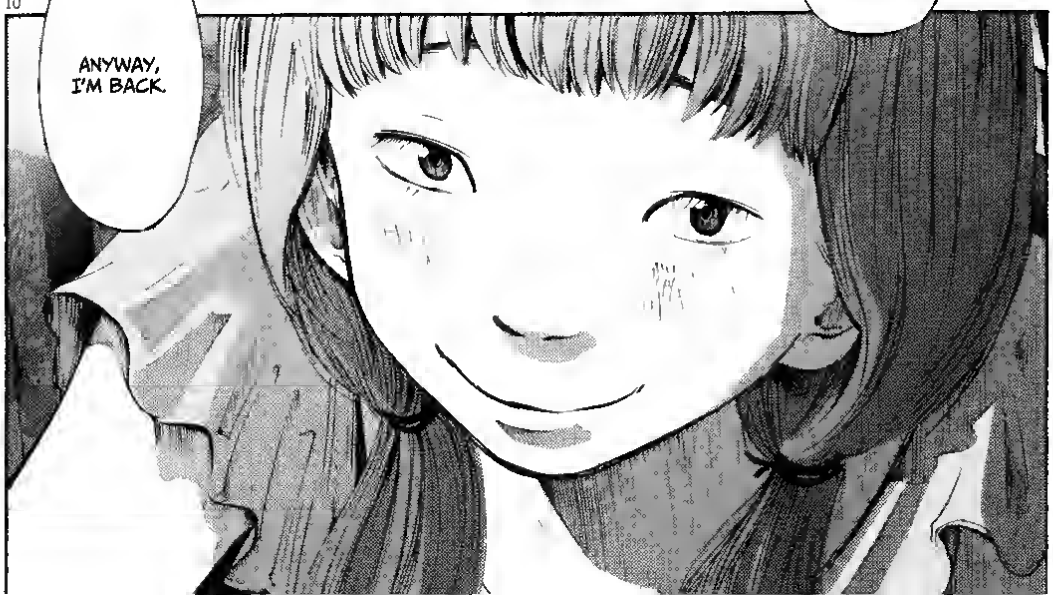


as I'd feared I would be back then.

I'm not as disappointed with myself

And I'm just me.

TAE!
DID YOU COME TO MEET ME?
HAHA.

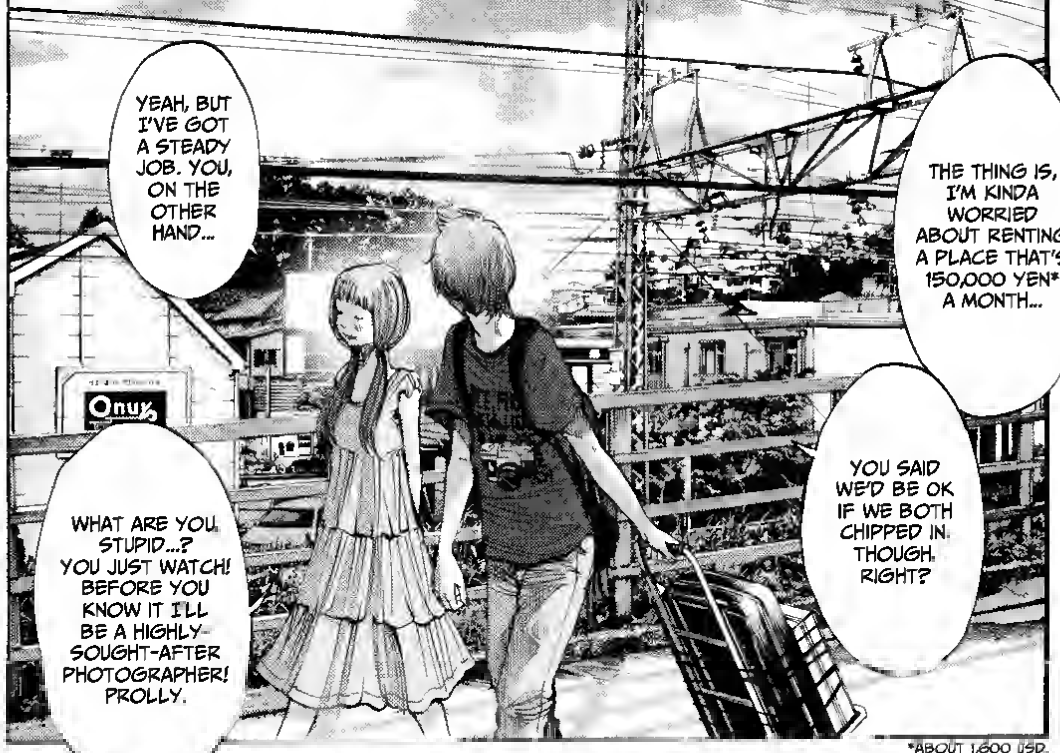

ANYWAY, I'M BACK.

and I've gotten used to the crowded trains.

and my clothes are a little more drab,

I've stopped crying at music and movies,

But I'm still just me.


YEAH, BUT I'VE GOT A STEADY JOB. YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND...
THE THING IS, I'M KINDA WORRIED ABOUT RENTING A PLACE THAT'S 150,000 YEN* A MONTH...
YOU SAID WE'D BE OK IF WE BOTH CHIPPED IN. THOUGH, RIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU, STUPID...? YOU JUST WATCH! BEFORE YOU KNOW IT I'LL BE A HIGHLY-SOUGHT-AFTER PHOTOGRAPHER! PROLLY.

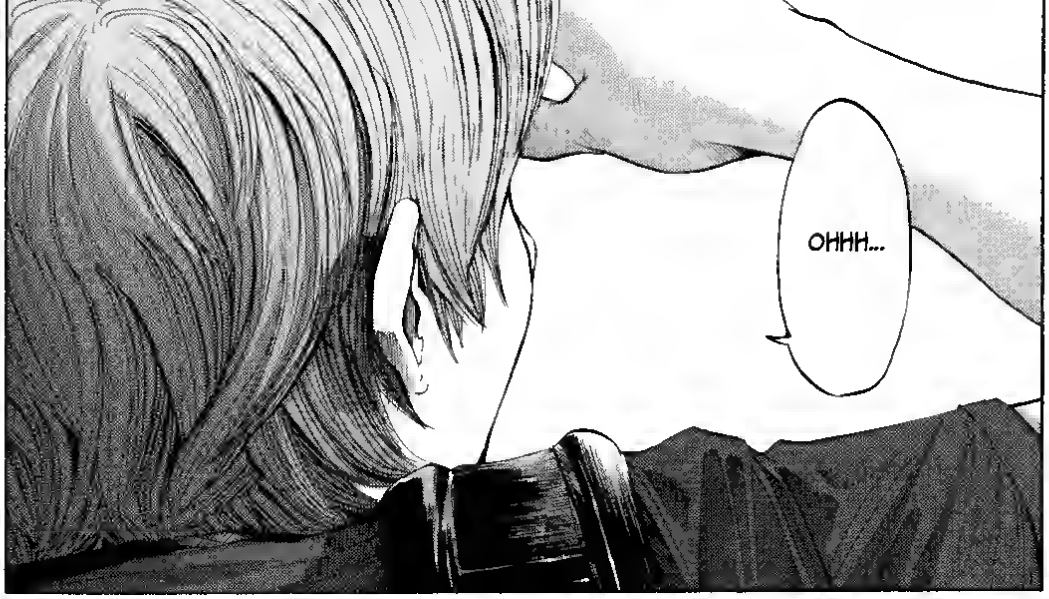
*ABOUT 1,600 USD.

is nothing but a vague mirage to me now.

The wonderful world I'd imagined back then

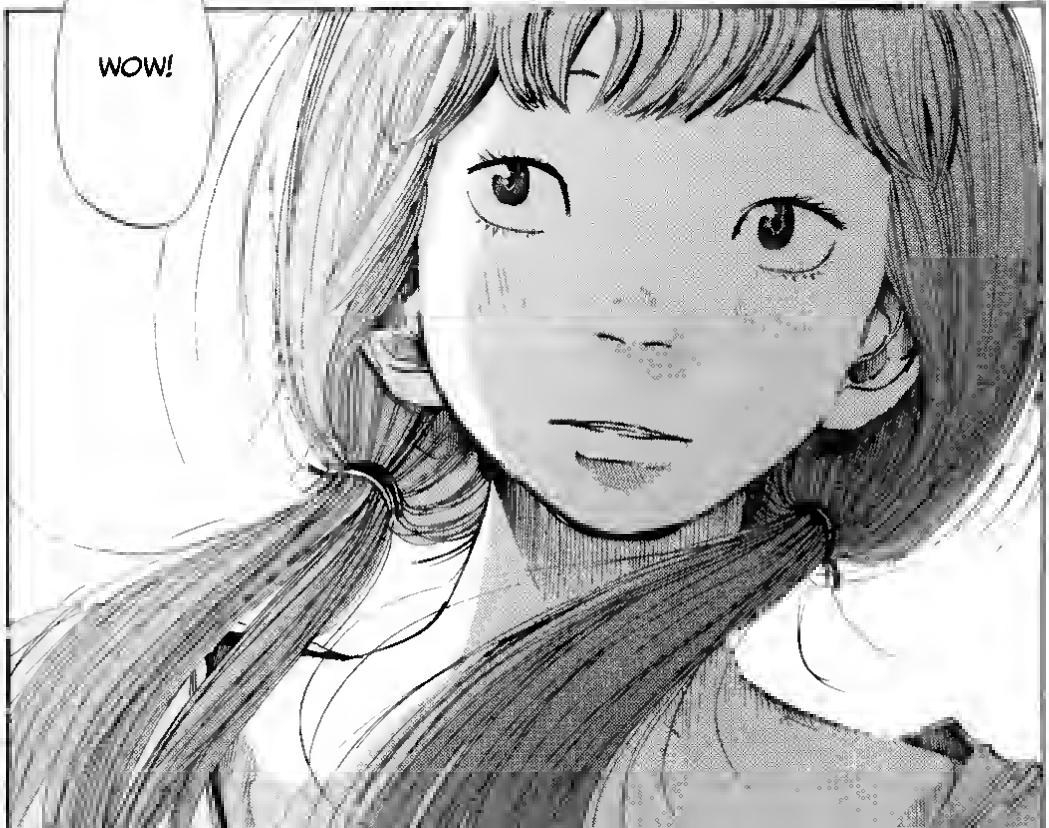
SO? HOW WAS THE JOB?
D'YOU HAVE FUN WITH THE BIKINI MODELS?
IT WAS A *FUCKING JOKE*. ALL OUR CAMERAS AND EQUIPMENT GOT STOLEN AS SOON AS WE LANDED IN HONOLULU.
THEN US ASSISTANTS HAD TO RUN ALL OVER THE PLACE TRYING TO FIND 'EM EVEN THOUGH NONE OF US SPOKE ENGLISH...

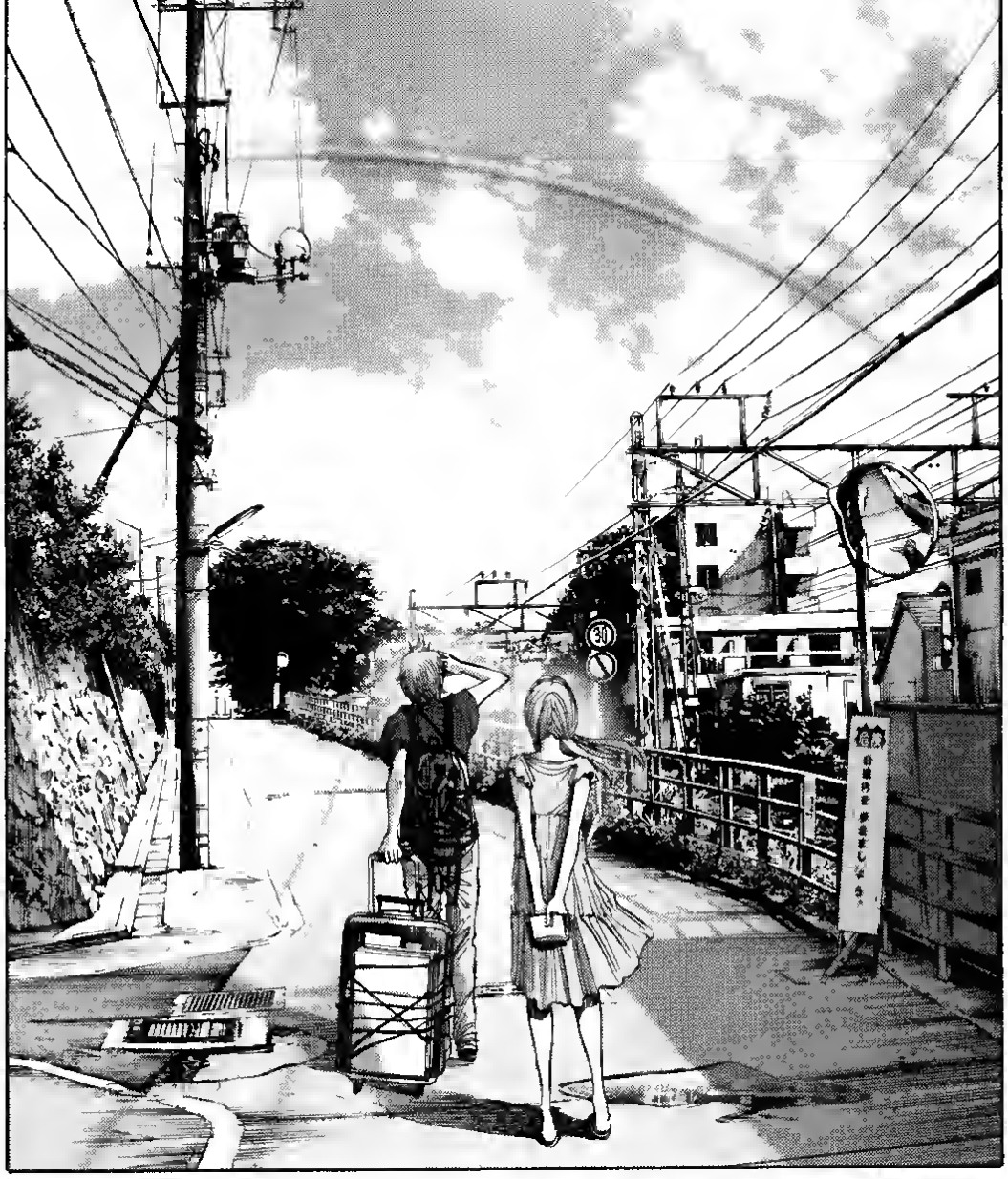
"Or maybe I didn't even realize back then that I was in my own little wonderful world of not knowing," sometimes I wonder.

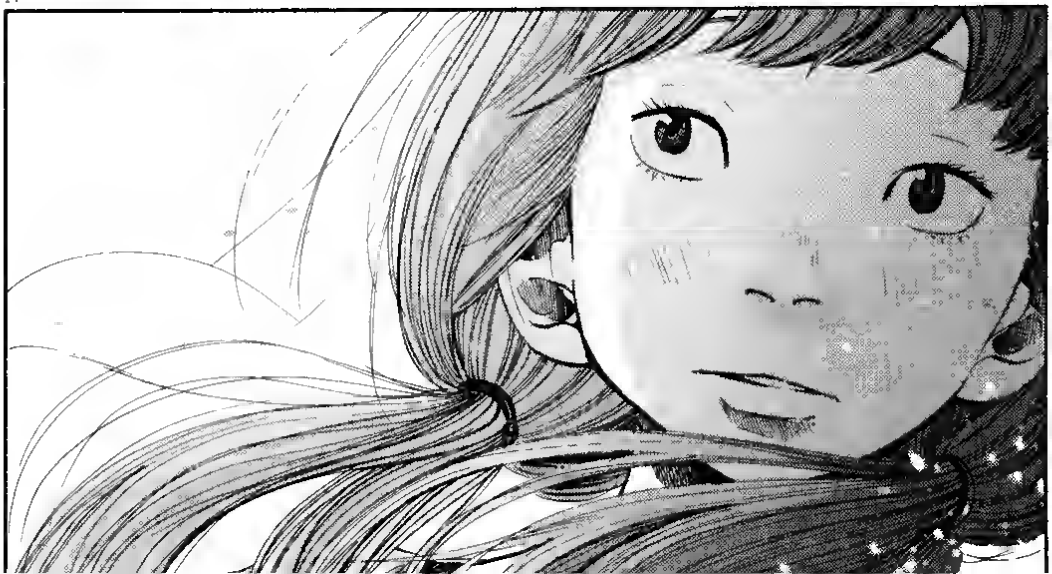


And that's the one thing connecting this me with the me back then.

But he's still with me after five years.







ANYWAY, SO I WENT SKYDIVING WHEN I WAS THERE...
I THOUGHT THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A WORK TRIP!
COME ON, JUST HEAR ME OUT.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT A RAINBOW LOOKS LIKE FROM UP ABOVE?
UMM...
ER... A CIRCLE?
HEY! YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO ACTUALLY GET IT RIGHT!
ANYWAY, I THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY FUCKING COOL!
WOW...
REALLY ...?

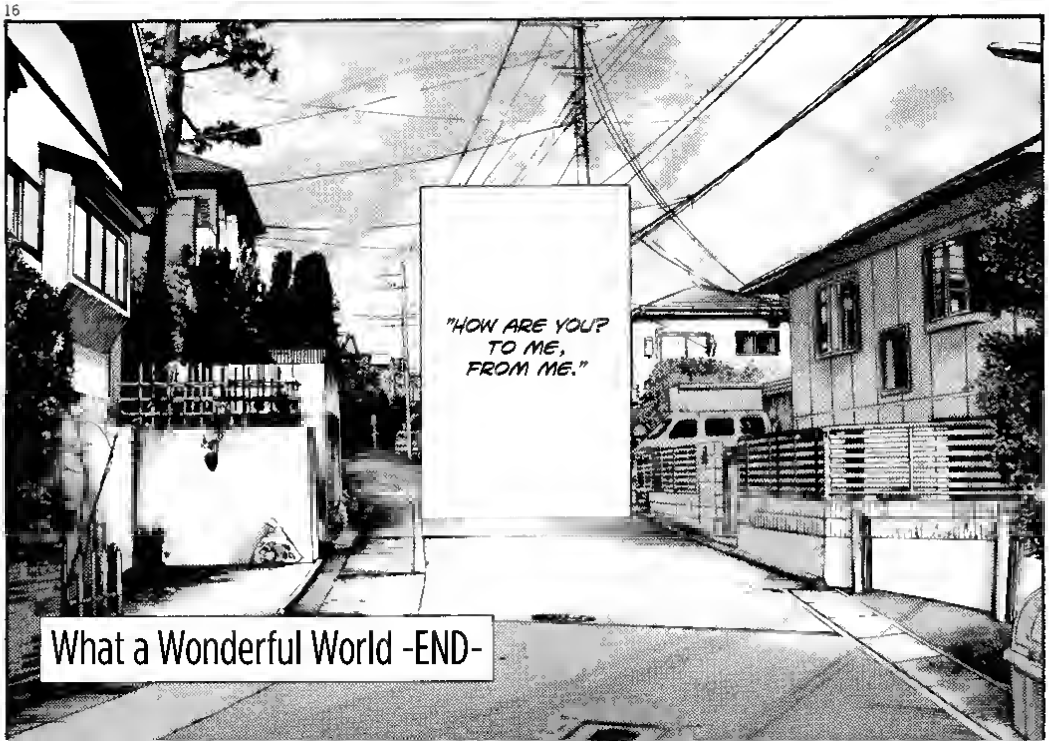
But right now... I'm all right.

See? There's one more thing turning me into another boring adult.

I don't know how many more times I'll feel like this in my lifetime,

but right now I'm thinking that when I get home...

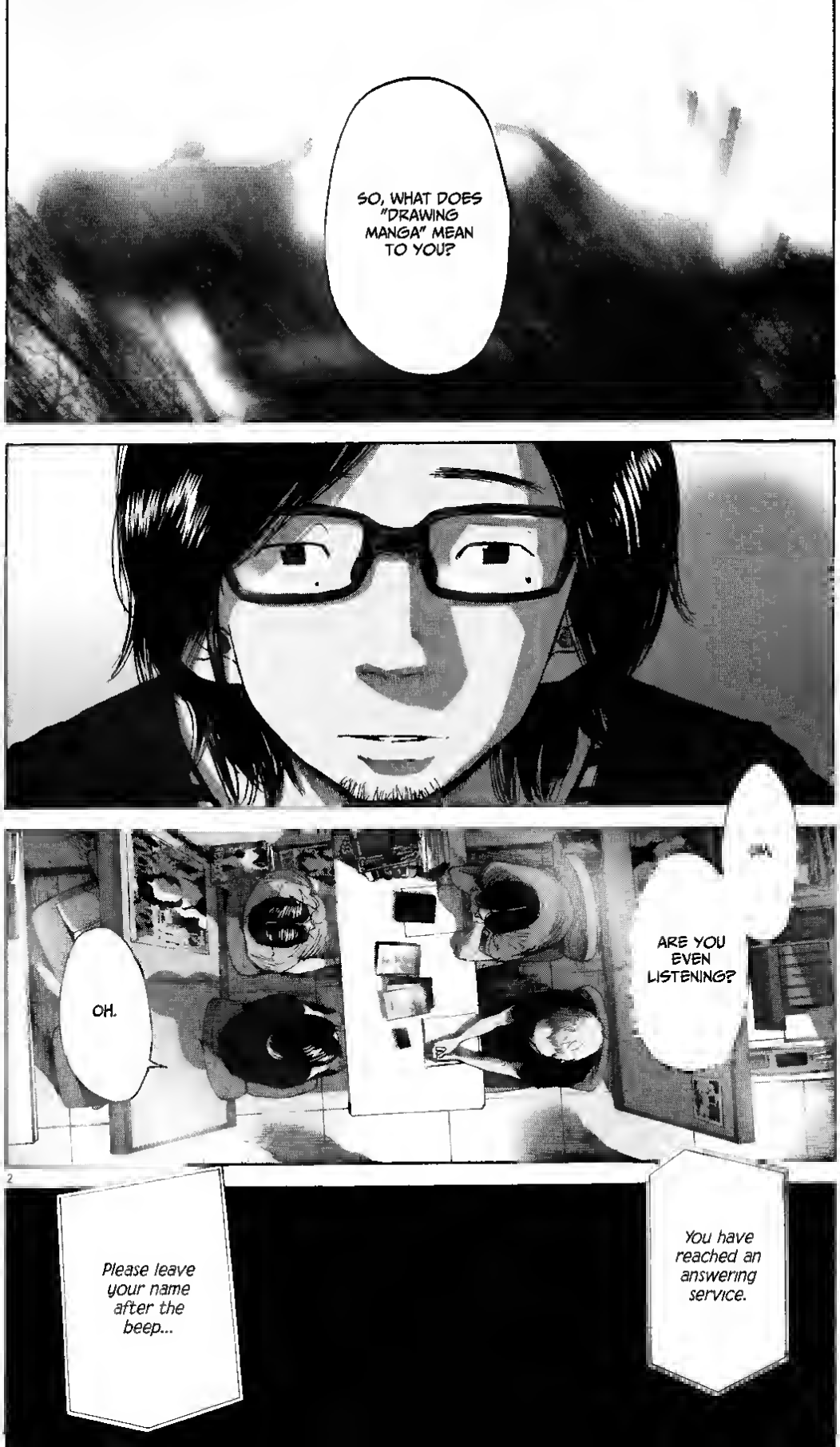
I'll quickly write myself a letter.



What a Wonderful World -END-

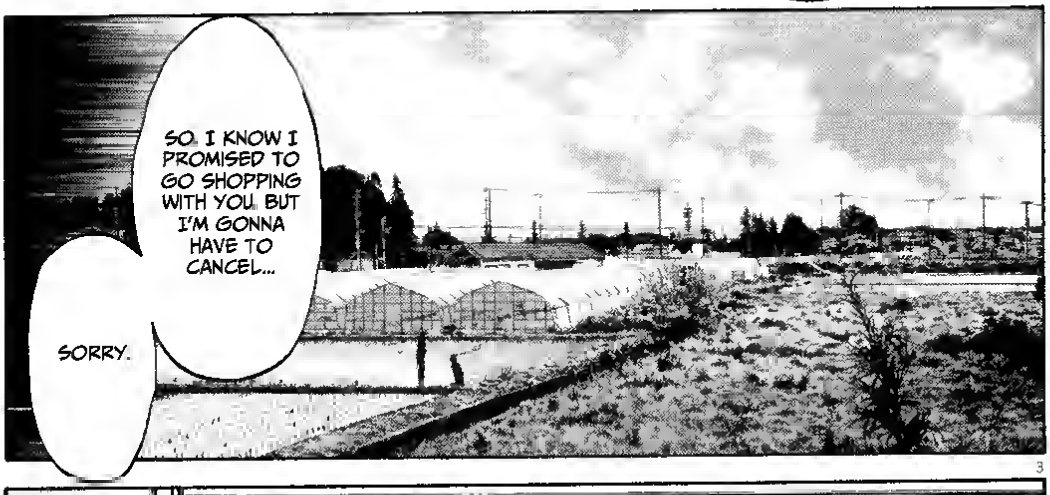
Tokyo

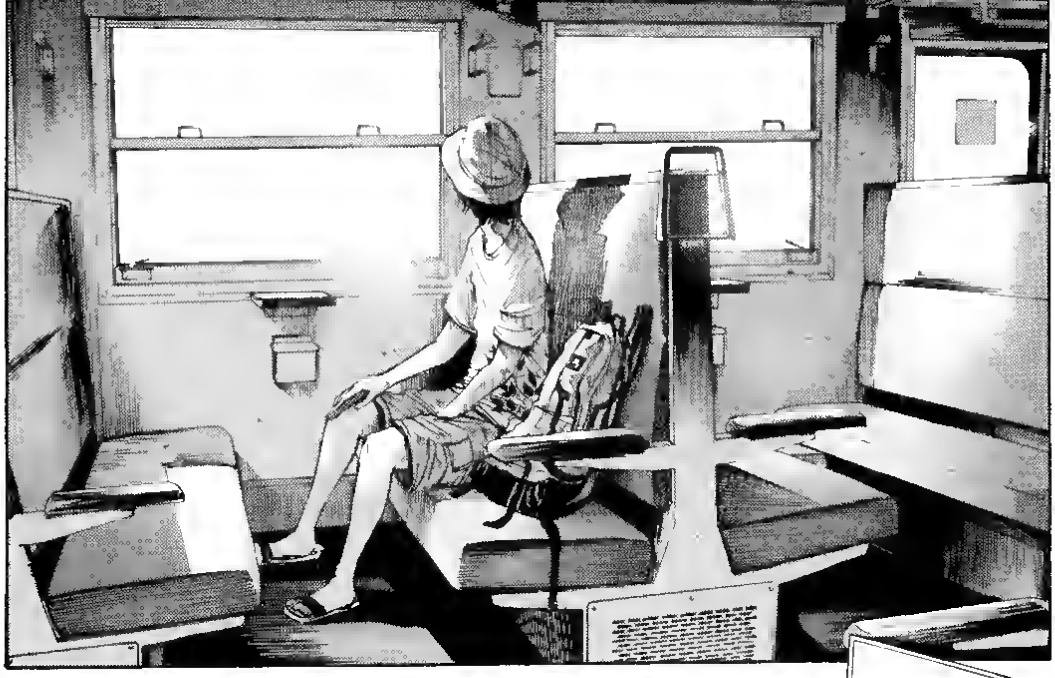
First published in *Big Comic Spirits*, Issue #40 (September 15/22, 2008).


SO, WHAT DOES "DRAWING MANGA" MEAN TO YOU?
OH.
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?
2
Please leave your name after the beep...
You have reached an answering service.

UH, HI.
IT'S ME.

I THINK I MENTIONED IT BEFORE,
BUT I'M GOING TO BE OUT OF TOWN FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS FOR MY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REUNION.


SO. I KNOW I PROMISED TO GO SHOPPING WITH YOU. BUT I'M GONNA HAVE TO CANCEL...
SORRY.



4

Uh, hello, this is Hanegi with Weekly Young Monday.
I was hoping I could pick up the manuscript for the next chapter early next week...

5
UH... YEAH, I THINK THAT'LL BE OK...
I'VE ALREADY GOT IT DONE IN MY HEAD... YEAH.
KR-501
Young Monday
02 Young Monday
03 Young Monday
04 Young Monday
05 Young Monday
NO IMAGE
メニュー

みっちゃん
居酒屋 みっちゃん

SO I HEAR THE SUPER-MARKET BY THE JUSCO IS GOING OUT OF BUSINESS AGAIN.
HUH? DOESN'T MIYAKE'S WIFE WORK THERE?
LATELY WE'VE BEEN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST TO HAVE A KID.
AHAHA!
I HEARD ODA GOT ANOTHER NEW CAR.
'NOTHER THREE BEERS OVER HERE!

HEY, HEY, HEY, HARU!
ARE YOU REALLY A MANGA ARTIST?
CONGRATU-LATIONS!

THAT'S A TOUGH JOB IF YOU DON'T SELL WELL, THOUGH, RIGHT? ARE YOU MAKING ENDS MEET?
YEAH, WELL... I'M DOING PRETTY GOOD ACTUALLY...
ARE YOU IN JUMP? IF YOU ARE, MY BROTHER MIGHT BE A FAN.
WHAT SORT OF MANGA DO YOU DRAW?
UM... IT'S JUST A LOW-KEY TEEN STORY IN A SEINEN MAGAZINE... KIND OF HARD TO EXPLAIN...
IS IT ANY GOOD?
MAYBE I SHOULD GO AHEAD AND GET YOUR AUTOGRAPH ANYWAY!
OH, BUT I DON'T HAVE A COPY.
AHAHA...
NO WORRIES. IF YOU HAVE A PEN, I'LL SIGN WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT.

HEY, CAN I GET A MARKER?!
OH, WHAT'S THIS?
HARU'S HERE? NOW THAT'S A SHOCKER!

OH... UH... TAKAYAMA?
WHAT'RE YOU USING MY FULL NAME FOR?!
WELL, I GUESS IT'S NO SURPRISE YOU FORGOT MY NICKNAME.
YOU WENT TO PRIVATE SCHOOL STARTING IN JUNIOR HIGH, SO IT'S BEEN WHAT, 15 YEARS?
YOU JUST GOT OFF WORK?

I WORK AT AN IMPORT CAR DEALERSHIP.
I HATE HAVING TO WEAR A TIE IN THIS FUCKING HEAT AND BOW AND SCRAPE TO ALL THOSE RICH ASSHOLES.
LOOK AT YOU WITH YOUR BEARD, YOU LUCKY BASTARD.
YOU'RE A MANGA ARTIST NOW, RIGHT? IN TOKYO?

YOU ALWAYS WERE GOOD AT DRAWING, EVEN AS A KID.
IT'S PRETTY AMAZING THAT YOU'RE STILL DRAWING, THOUGH.

NAH...
I KIND OF FEEL LIKE I'M AT A DEAD END RIGHT NOW...
THESE DAYS I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY I WAS SO DETERMINED TO STICK WITH MANGA...

UGH, LOOK AT YOU!
YOU'RE ALWAYS MAKING SUCH A MESS, TAKAYAN!
HEHE, SORRY.
THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS AS SOON AS I START DRINKING.
Marlboco
DID YOU HURT YOUR ARM?

SERIOUSLY ?!
YOU DON'T EVEN REMEMBER *THAT?!*

OK, WE'RE HEADING FOR MATSUTARO NEXT!
SEE YOU GUYS THERE!
YOU REALLY GOT SHIT-FACED.
LUCKY YOU, NOT HAVING TO DRIVE.

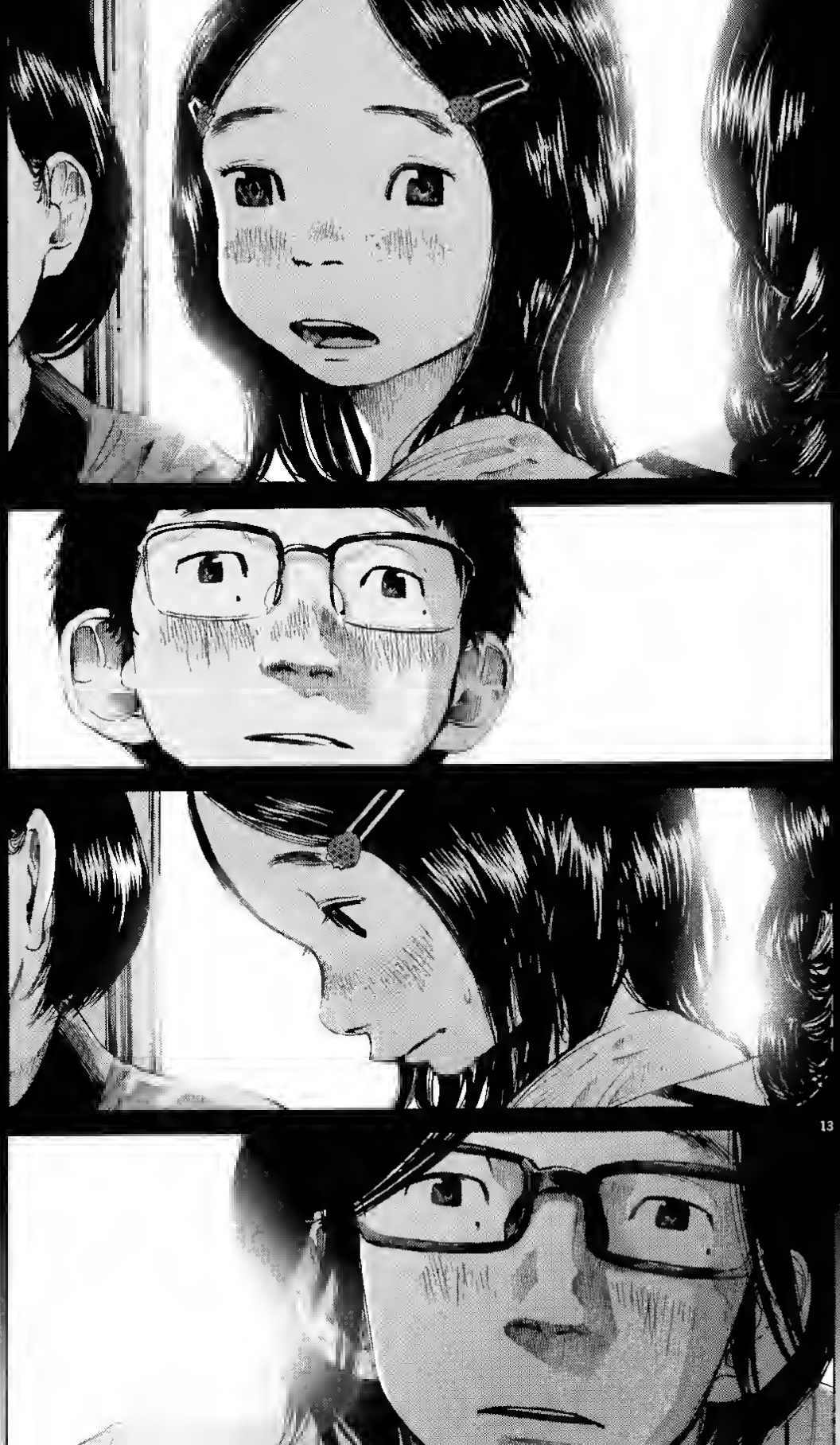
TAKAYAN.

I BROUGHT RYOHEI WITH ME, SO I'M HEADING HOME NOW.
OH, NATSUKI, SEE YA!
NATSUKI...?
HEY, HEY, YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
DON'T TELL ME YOU FORGOT NATSUKI, TOO?!

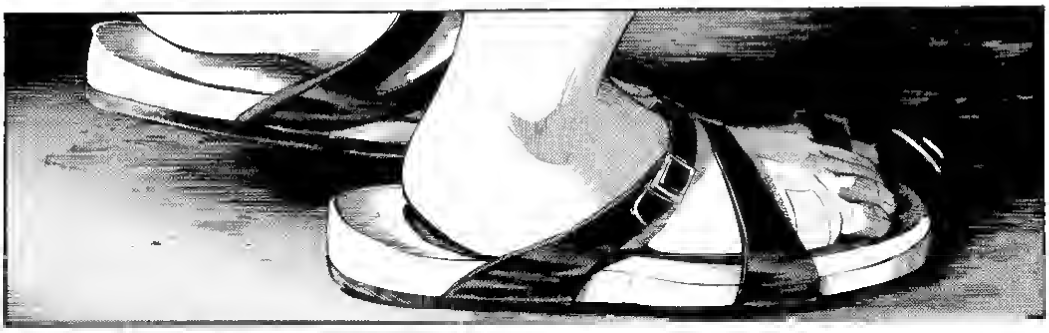
HEY, HARU. THIS ENEMY'S REALLY STRONG.
ALL HIS FRIENDS ARE DEAD. THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN WIN NOW.
DON'T WORRY.
HE USES A TIME MACHINE TO GO BACK IN TIME TO BEAT HIM.
FOR REAL?! COOL!

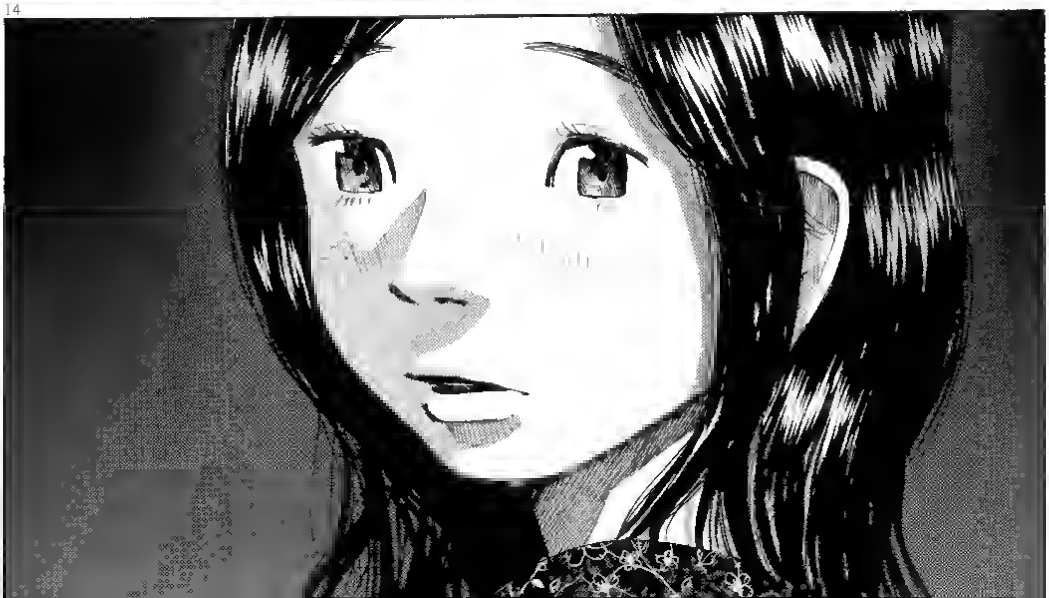
HE'S GONNA BEAT HIM WITH A SUPER FANTASTIC POWER.
AND THEN THE FUTURE'S ALL GONNA BE PEACE-FUL.
HARU.
THIS IS REALLY AWESOME.

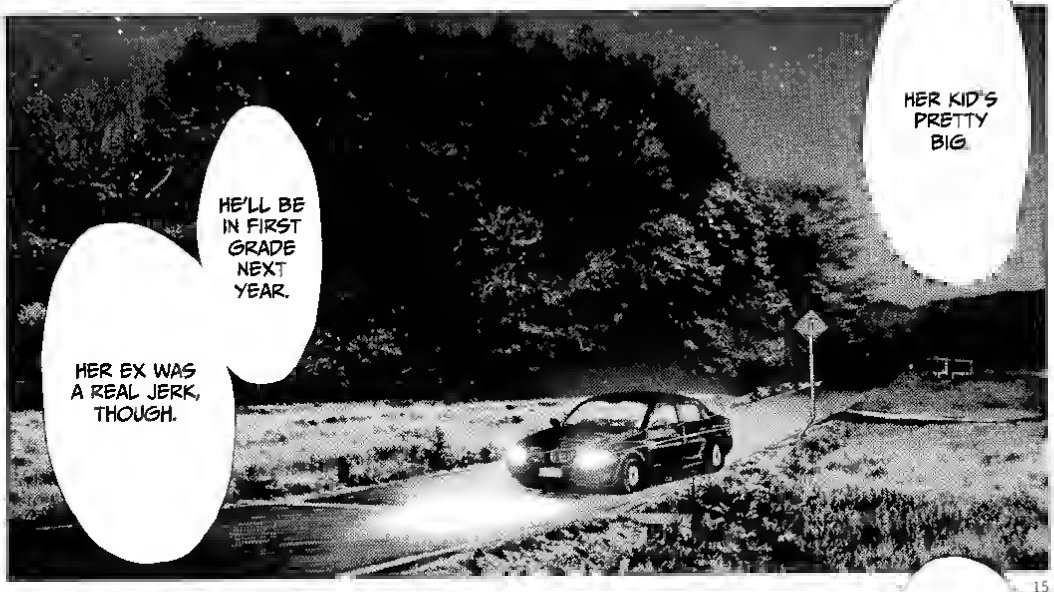
I'LL HAVE IT FINISHED BY MONDAY. PROMISE.
I'VE ALREADY GOT IT DONE IN MY HEAD.
WOW, YOU'RE A REAL PRO!
WELL, THEY ALWAYS SAY EVIL NEVER PROSPERS.
HEY, WHEN CAN WE READ THE NEXT CHAPTER?
TITLE: SNAKEMAN AND THE GREAT SPACE-TIME WAR



NATSUKI!






HER KID'S PRETTY BIG.
HE'LL BE IN FIRST GRADE NEXT YEAR.
HER EX WAS A REAL JERK, THOUGH.

BAD LUCK WITH MEN RUNS IN HER FAMILY...
HER DAD USED TO GET REALLY VIOLENT, TOO.

ANYWAY,
NOT LIKE IT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU ANYMORE.

SO WHAT'S TOKYO REALLY LIKE, HUH?
IT'S NOT A BAD PLACE
YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING YOU WANT, AND IT'S ALWAYS BUSY.

I DO, BUT...
HOTEL CHOTEIKYO
WE'RE BOTH SO BUSY WITH WORK, WE HARDLY EVER SEE EACH OTHER..

THAT'S NOT VERY CONVINCING. YOU SOUND TIRED.

YOU OK? YOU GOT A GIRLFRIEND TO TAKE CARE OF YOU?

THERE ARE TIMES I JUST FEEL SO COMPLETELY ALONE.
I GO OUT AND EVERY-ONE'S A STRANGER,
AND THERE'S ALL THIS STUFF, BUT NONE OF IT IS MINE...
...AND I START FEELING LIKE I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM OR WHAT I'M DOING...
MAYBE I CAME BACK HERE TODAY BECAUSE I WAS LONELY...
BUT IT'S LIKE...
THERE'S NOT REALLY A PLACE FOR ME HERE EITHER...
I'M GLAD I CAME, THOUGH.
I'M GLAD YOU GUYS ALL SEEM TO BE DOING WELL.
YOU REALLY PISS ME OFF, YOU KNOW?
YOU ALWAYS HAVE.

I KNEW. YOU KNOW.
YOU ALWAYS ACTED LIKE THERE WAS A LINE BETWEEN YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE. LIKE YOU WERE SO DIFFERENT.
AND LIKE NOW. WHAT YOU REALLY MEANT WAS "IT MUST BE NICE TO BE SATISFIED WITH SMALL-TOWN LIFE."

I DON'T REALLY HAVE MUCH SYMPATHY FOR YOUR LONELINESS.
YOU CHOSE THAT LIFE.

家内安全
YOU'RE JUST RUNNING AWAY COMING HERE.
SO QUIT YOUR WHINING AND JUST SUCK IT UP.
WE'RE ALL DOING THE BEST WE CAN, YOU KNOW.

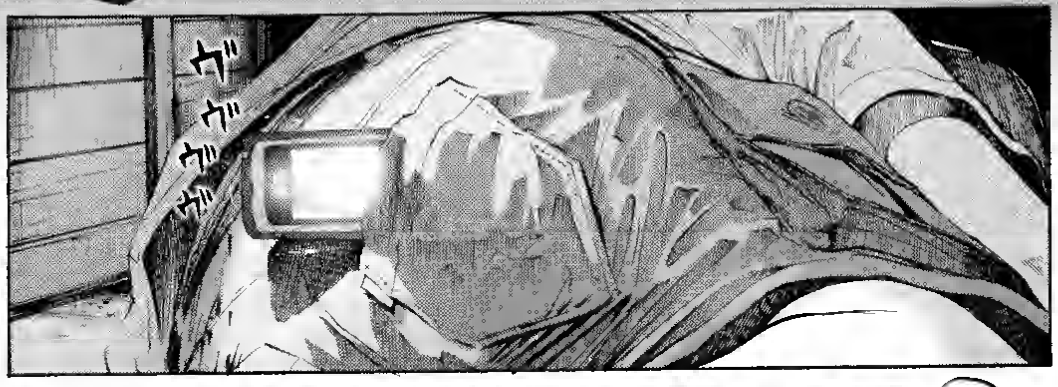
YOU SURE THIS IS OK?
IT'S STILL QUITE A WAYS TO YOUR FOLKS', ISN'T IT?
DON'T GET PULLED OVER FOR DRUNK DRIVING. YOU'RE A CAR SALESMAN, AFTER ALL.
TAKAYAN.
COME TO ME WHEN YOU WANT TO BUY A CAR, OK?
YOU MUST HAVE SOME SAVINGS, RIGHT?
I DON'T HAVE A LICENSE.
HARU!
I...
ME AND NATSUKI ARE GETTING MARRIED.

STAND UP...
STAND UP, HARU...!

DON'T THINK YOU'RE SO GREAT...
...JUST 'CAUSE YOU CAN DRAW!
THERE'RE NO SUCH THINGS AS TIME MACHINES!
WHAT GOOD IS MANGA GONNA DO YOU ANYWAY?!

RIGHT, NATSUKI?!
WHAT DO YOU SEE IN HIM ANYWAY?!
HE'S JUST A WIMP WHO CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT DRAW!
SOMEONE LIKE HIM'S NEVER GONNA BE ABLE TO BEAT YOUR DAD!

AH ...!
NO WAY ...!
HUH?!
WHA ...?


ウヴ ウヴ ウヴ

UH, HELLO ...?
OH, YEAH, SORRY. I WAS SLEEPING.
DID YOU GET MY MESSAGE?

ME?
IT'S BEEN REALLY NOSTALGIC. HAVEN'T SEEN THEM IN 15 YEARS, AFTER ALL.
YOU STILL WORKING?
WOW, IT'S ALREADY FOUR... YOU'VE BEEN BUSY.
IT'S LIKE,
SIGN NO TRESPASSING
I REALIZED HOW MUCH YOU FORGET OVER THE YEARS...
立入禁止
HARU!
OVER HERE!

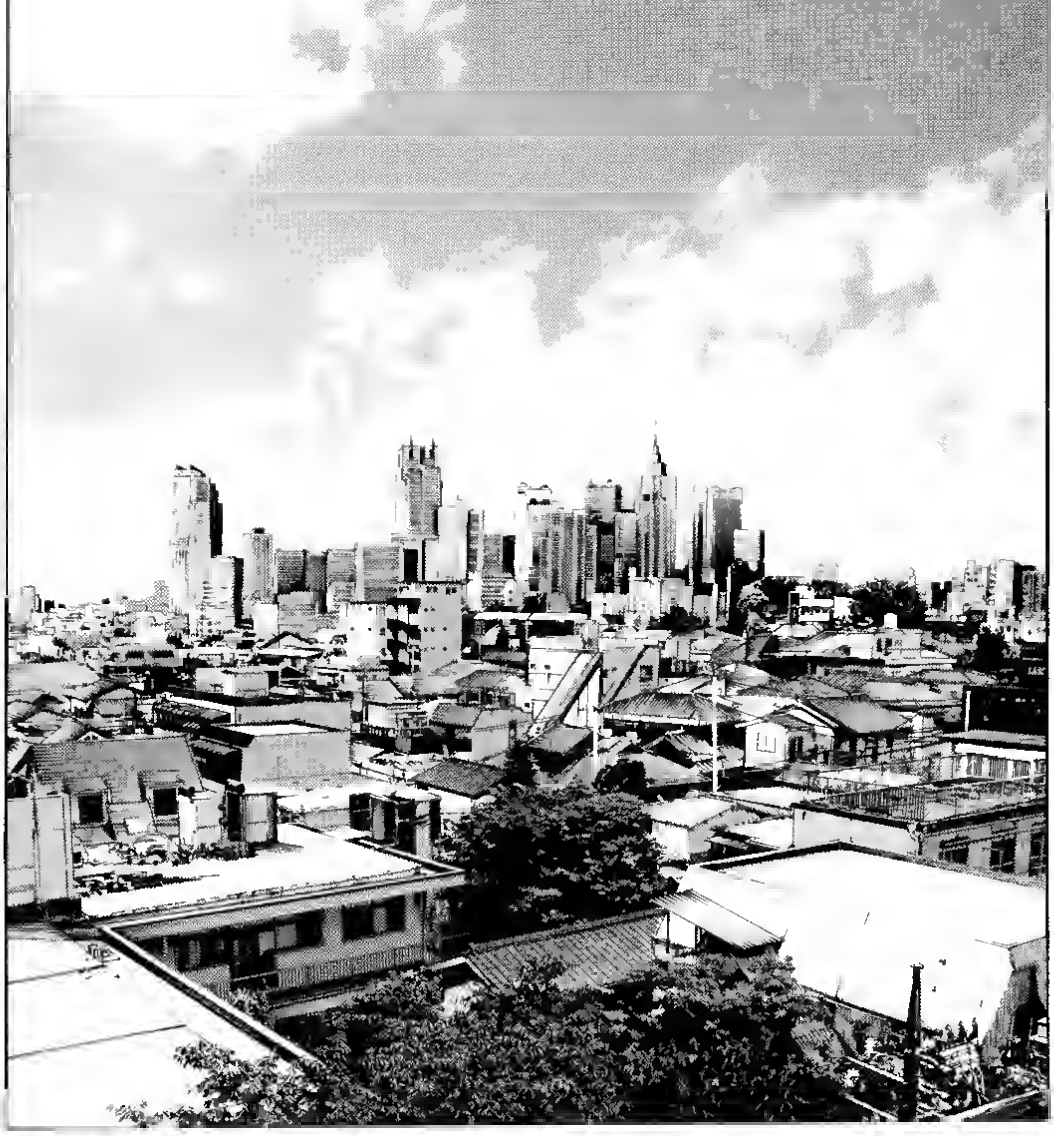
BUT...
WHEN YOU REMEMBER THE STUFF YOU THOUGHT YOU'D FORGOTTEN...
...THE MEMORIES ARE SURPRISINGLY VIVID.

IT'S WEIRD SEEING EVERYONE GROWN UP.
LIKE I TIME-TRAVELED TO THE FUTURE OR SOMETHING...

HAHA...
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

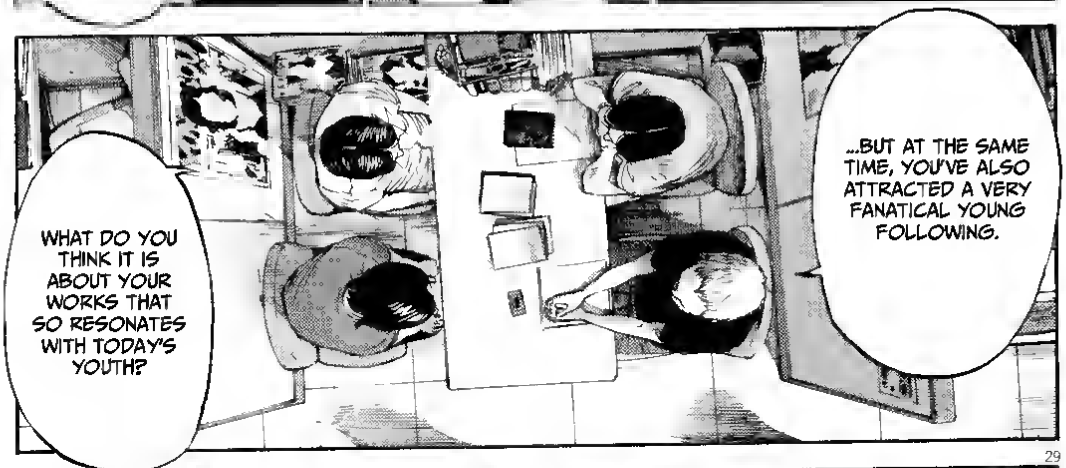
HARU, HURRY!
OH, SORRY.
I FORGOT YOU'RE WORKING...
I FOUND SOMETHING REALLY COOL!
I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL...
...WHEN I GET BACK IN TOWN.

HARU
...
IT'S A TIME MACHINE!



CRAP...

WHAT DOES "DRAWING MANGA" MEAN TO YOU?
NEVER MIND,
I'LL TRY A DIFFERENT QUESTION.
SOME PEOPLE HAVE SAID YOUR WORKS ARE TOO SENTIMENTAL...


...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'VE ALSO ATTRACTED A VERY FANATICAL YOUNG FOLLOWING.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS ABOUT YOUR WORKS THAT SO RESONATES WITH TODAY'S YOUTH?

I DON'T KNOW.
I JUST TRY TO MAKE WHAT I FEEL IS A GOOD STORY.
ALL I CAN SAY IS...

...I THINK I'M MISSING SOMETHING ESSENTIAL IN MYSELF...
...AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I DRAW...
...IT WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH TO FILL THAT HOLE.

SORRY FOR SAYING ALL THAT WEIRD STUFF...
I'LL PROBABLY GET LABELED AS A NEUROTIC AUTHOR NOW.
HAHAHA, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
NO ONE REALLY READS INTERVIEWS ANYWAY.
OK, I'M HEADING BACK TO THE OFFICE NOW.
THANKS FOR THE MANU-SCRIPT.
UM...!

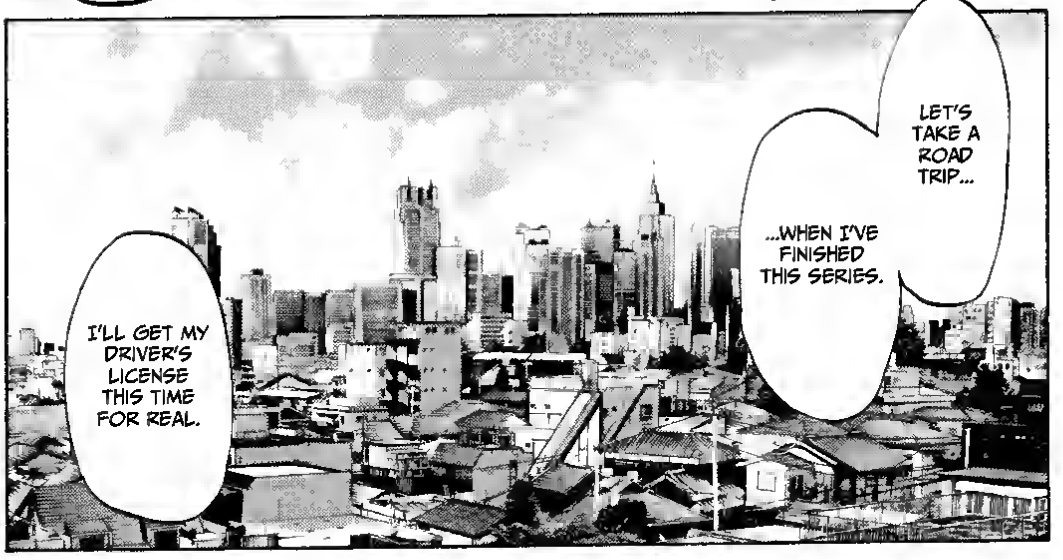
UMM, TO JINBOCHO, PLEASE
DO YOU THINK MY STORIES ARE INTERESTING?

南口出口
日本映画史上最高の感動作
日本総鬱病時代
県連続児童殺傷事件犯人の
女性タブー

IT'S LIKE, IT'S LIKE,
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS LIKE IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD?
SHUT UP, MAN. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S DONE FOR.

Departure has been delayed due to an emergency stop.
Please be patient while we investigate the cause.

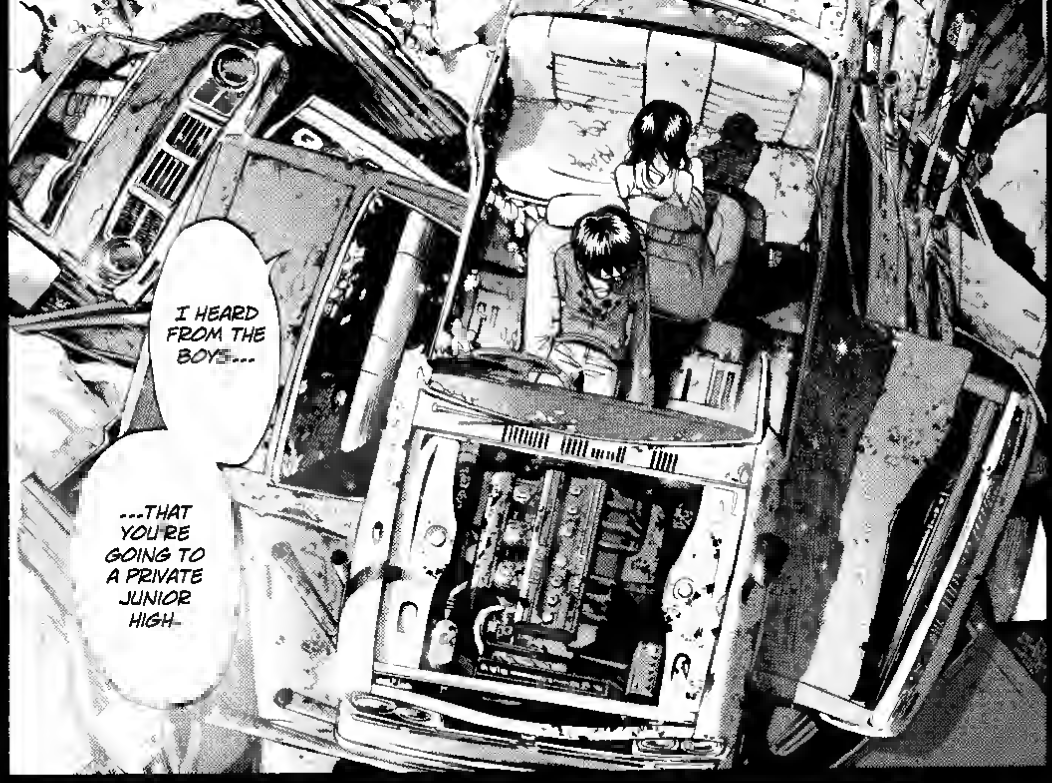
UH, HI.
IT'S ME.
You have reached an answering service.
Please leave your name after the beep...


LET'S TAKE A ROAD TRIP...
...WHEN I'VE FINISHED THIS SERIES.
I'LL GET MY DRIVER'S LICENSE THIS TIME FOR REAL.

HARU ---
IT'S A TIME MACHINE!

I'M NOT THAT DUMB.
THIS IS AN ILLEGAL DUMPING GROUND.

HARU.
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN DRAWING LATELY...
I LIKE YOU BEST WHEN YOU'RE DRAWING.


I HEARD FROM THE BOYS...
...THAT YOU'RE GOING TO A PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH.

WE WON'T ...
...SEE EACH OTHER ANYMORE.

HEY, HARU.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, OK?

TEN OR TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW...
IN THE FUTURE...
...THE WORLD WILL BE COMPLETELY AT PEACE AND THERE WON'T BE A SINGLE THING TO BE SAD ABOUT...

AND YOU'LL BE ALL GROWN UP...
...AND BE A FAMOUS MANGA ARTIST.

AND YOU'LL HAVE A HOUSE AND A CAR AND EVERYTHING YOU WANT...
AND A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO READING YOUR MANGA...

AND I...
...WILL BE... YOUR WIFE...
AND WE'LL LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

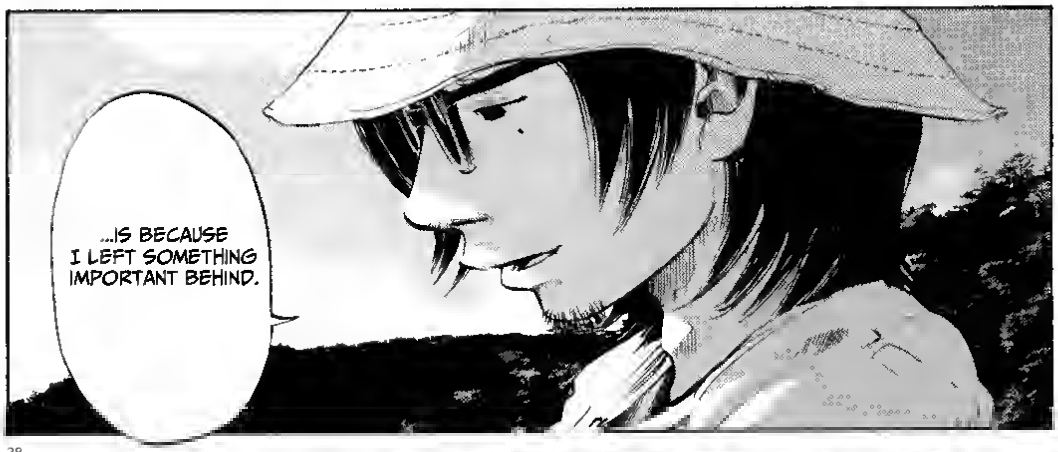
RIGHT ?
RIGHT, HARU?!
YOU CAN SEE IT, CAN'T YOU?!
CAN YOU SEE THE SAME FUTURE?!

YEAH ---

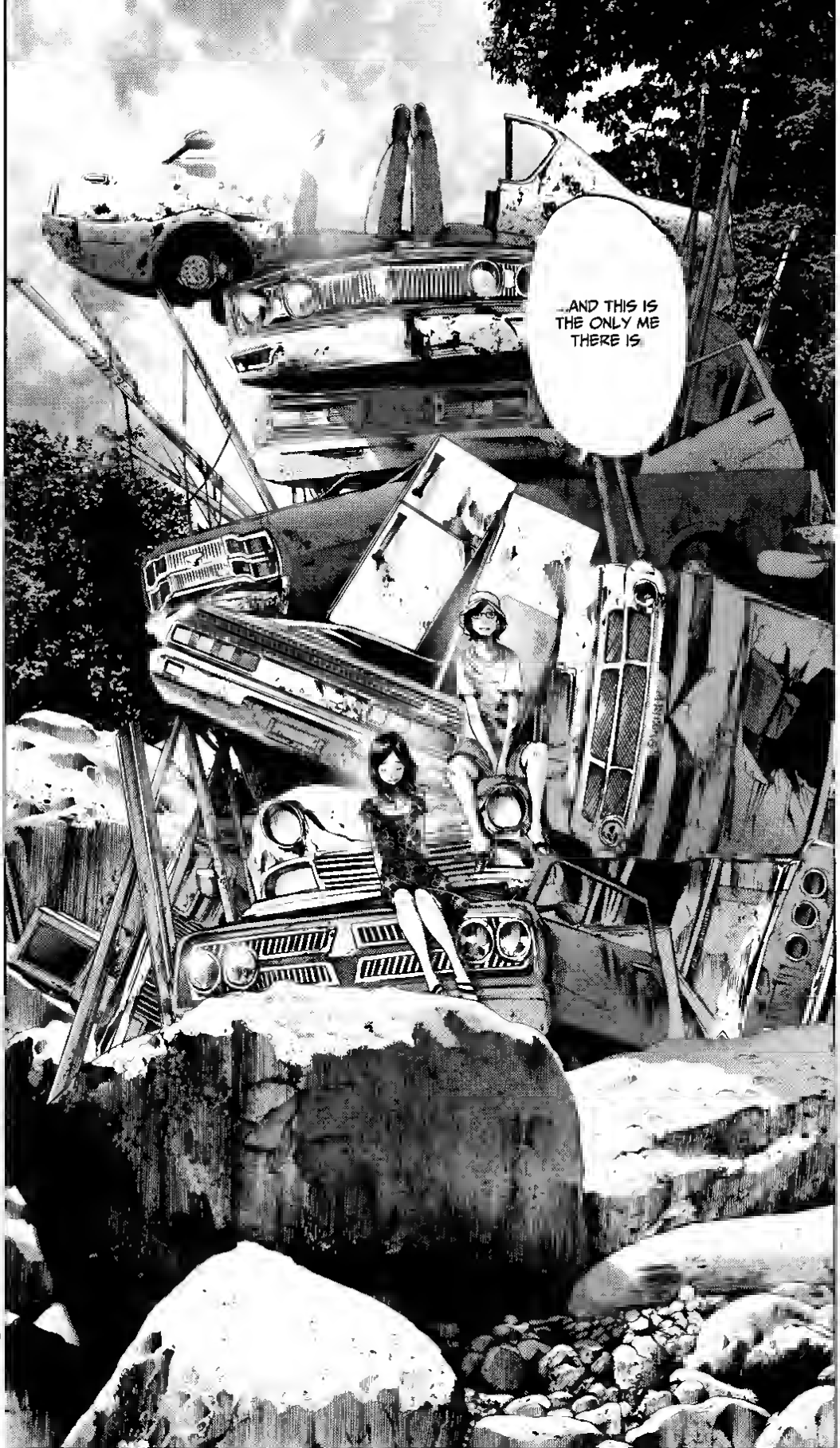
BACK THEN...

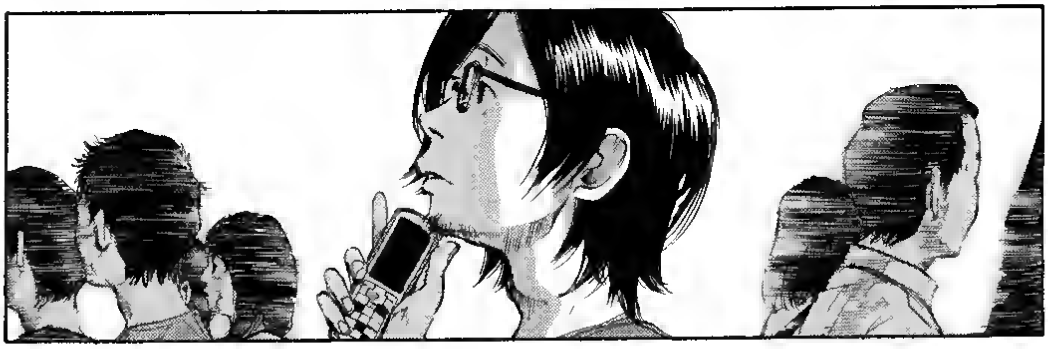
...IF I CLOSED MY EYES...
...I COULD BE ANYTHING, GO ANYWHERE.
EVEN THE FUTURE.

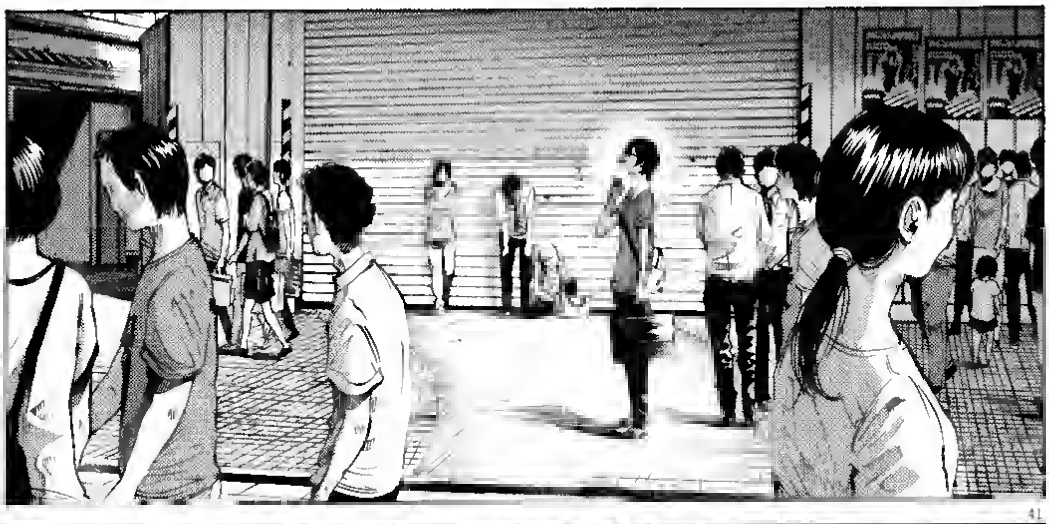
BUT...
...I WONDER IF THE REASON MY LIFE DOESN'T QUITE MATCH THAT FUTURE...

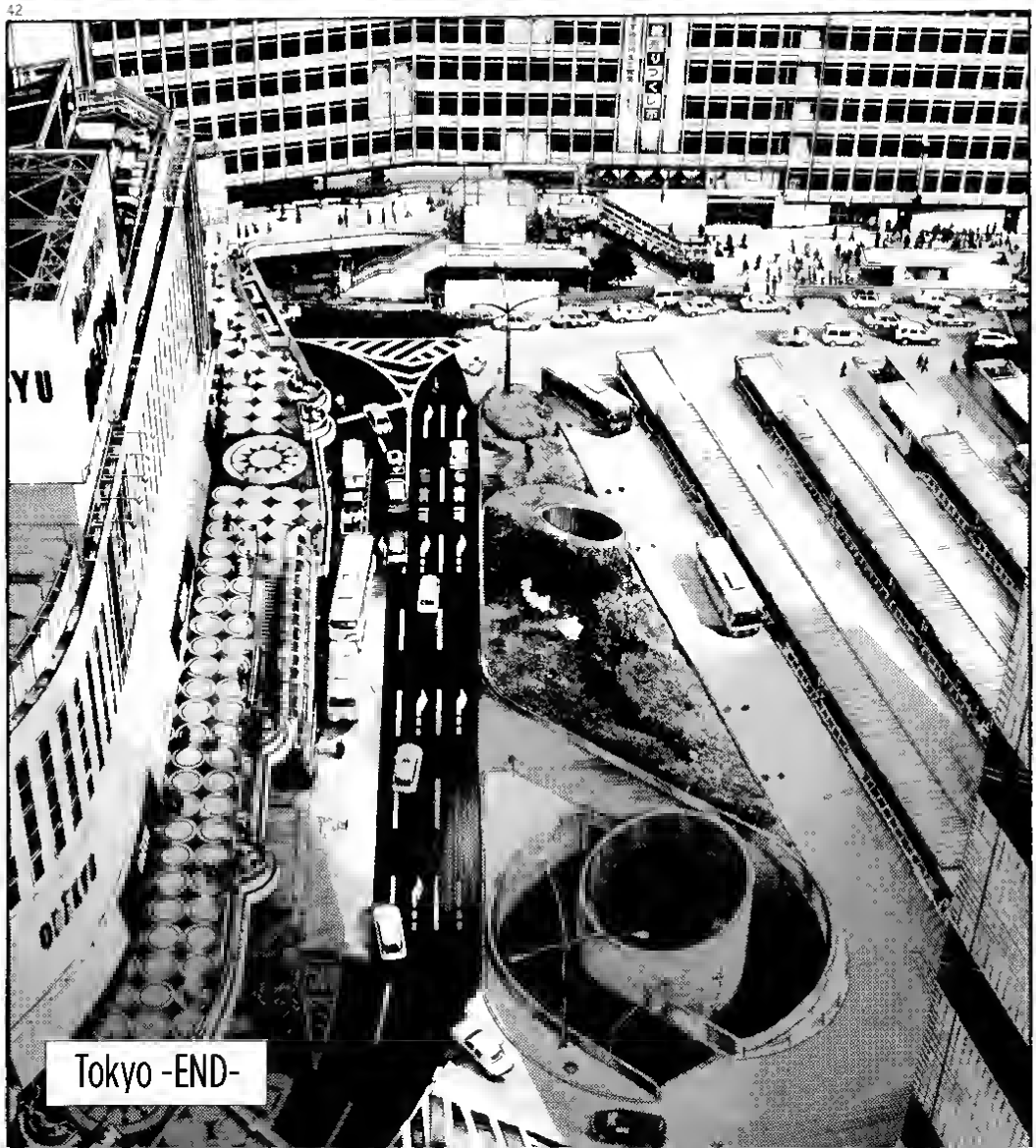

...IS BECAUSE I LEFT SOMETHING IMPORTANT BEHIND.

ANYWAY...
RIGHT NOW, NO MATTER WHERE I AM OR WHAT I DO,
I'M JUST... ALWAYS LONELY.
SOMETIMES I THINK...
...IF I OPEN MY EYES, I'LL BE A KID AGAIN AND NONE OF THIS WILL HAVE HAPPENED.
BUT IT HAS HAPPENED...


...AND THIS IS THE ONLY ME THERE IS.






Tokyo -END-

The End of the World

I had a dream about the end of the world.

I don't know if it was a war or an alien invasion.

But whatever it was, the whole city was destroyed,

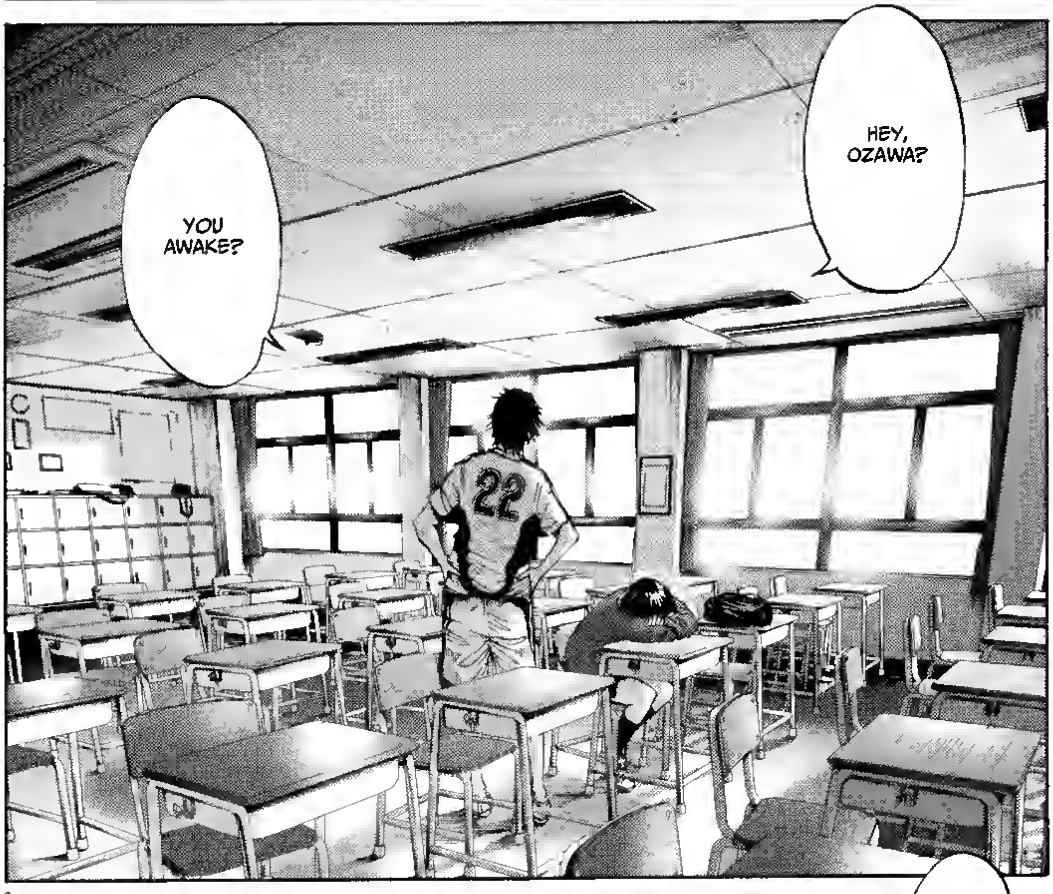
and as the sole survivor, I was at my wits' end, filled with loss and despair.

searching desperately for the real me.

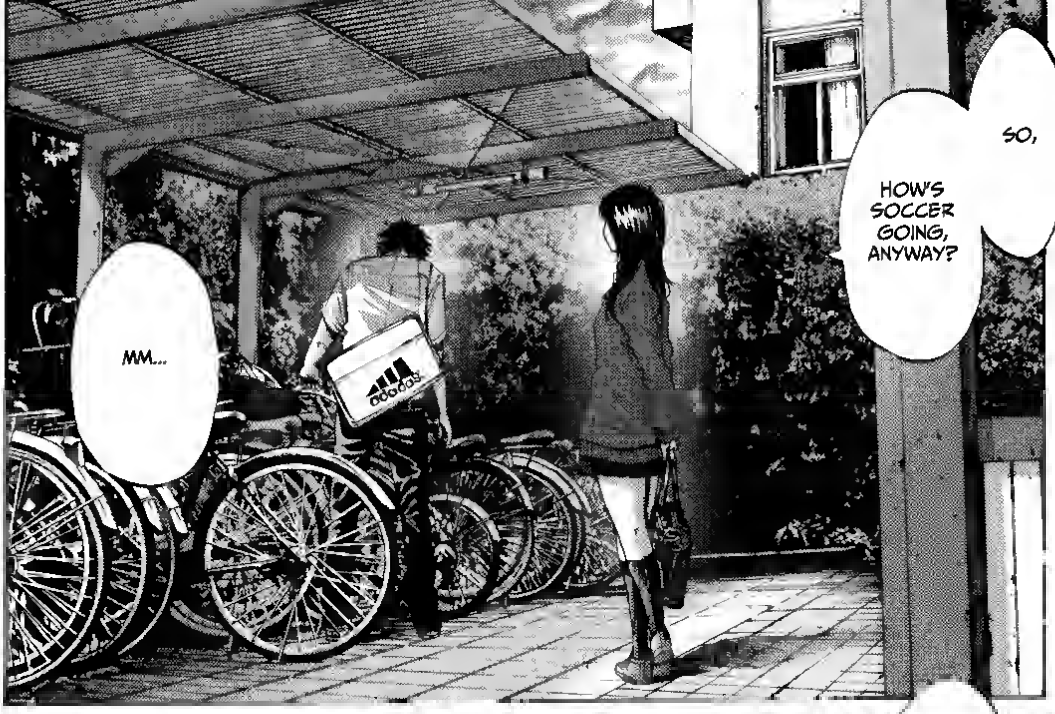
I lay there with my eyes closed,

Usually I couldn't care less if the world was destroyed.

Why do I feel like this?

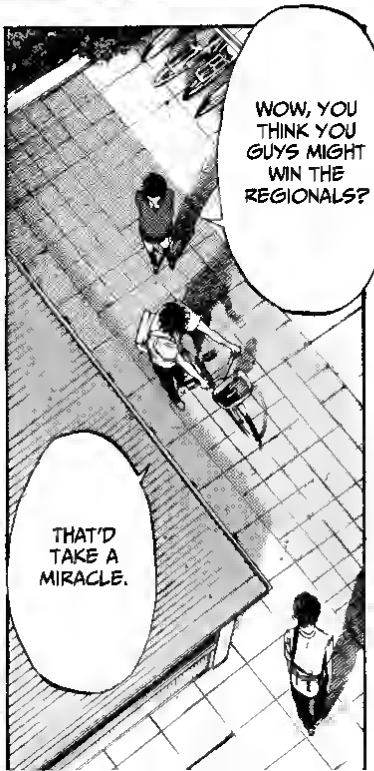


HUH? GUESS IT'S GONE ALREADY.
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.
IT'S LIKE, HOW CAN WE PLAY SOCCER AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
EVERYONE'S GOING CRAZY 'CAUSE WE SAW A UFO.
OH.
HAHA, YOU'VE GOT MARKS FROM YOUR SLEEVE ON YOUR FACE. DORK!
3
HE HE HE!
SORRY, SORRY.
YOU MEANIE!
HERE I WAS BEING NICE AND WAITING FOR YOU TO FINISH PRACTICE.


SO,
HOW'S SOCCER GOING, ANYWAY?
MM...

THE 11TH GRADERS ARE REALLY HUSTLING!
WE MIGHT ACTUALLY GET SOMEWHERE THIS YEAR!

BUT ANYWAY,


WOW, YOU THINK YOU GUYS MIGHT WIN THE REGIONALS?
THAT'D TAKE A MIRACLE.

NO MATTER HOW GOOD WE DO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT'LL EVER GET ME ANYWHERE IN LIFE...

COME ON, HURRY UP AND GET ON.

HEY!
NO RIDING DOUBLE!
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!

HUH?
WHAT?
I MEAN, YOU KNOW!

...YOU ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE YOU HAD THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON YOUR SHOULDERS!
BEFORE WE STARTED DATING...
REALLY ?
LIKE, YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED!

Actually, I think he's right.

Looking back, I just feel so ridiculous.

Why did I always used to make such a big deal out of every little thing?

and it's just sad, and a little painful.

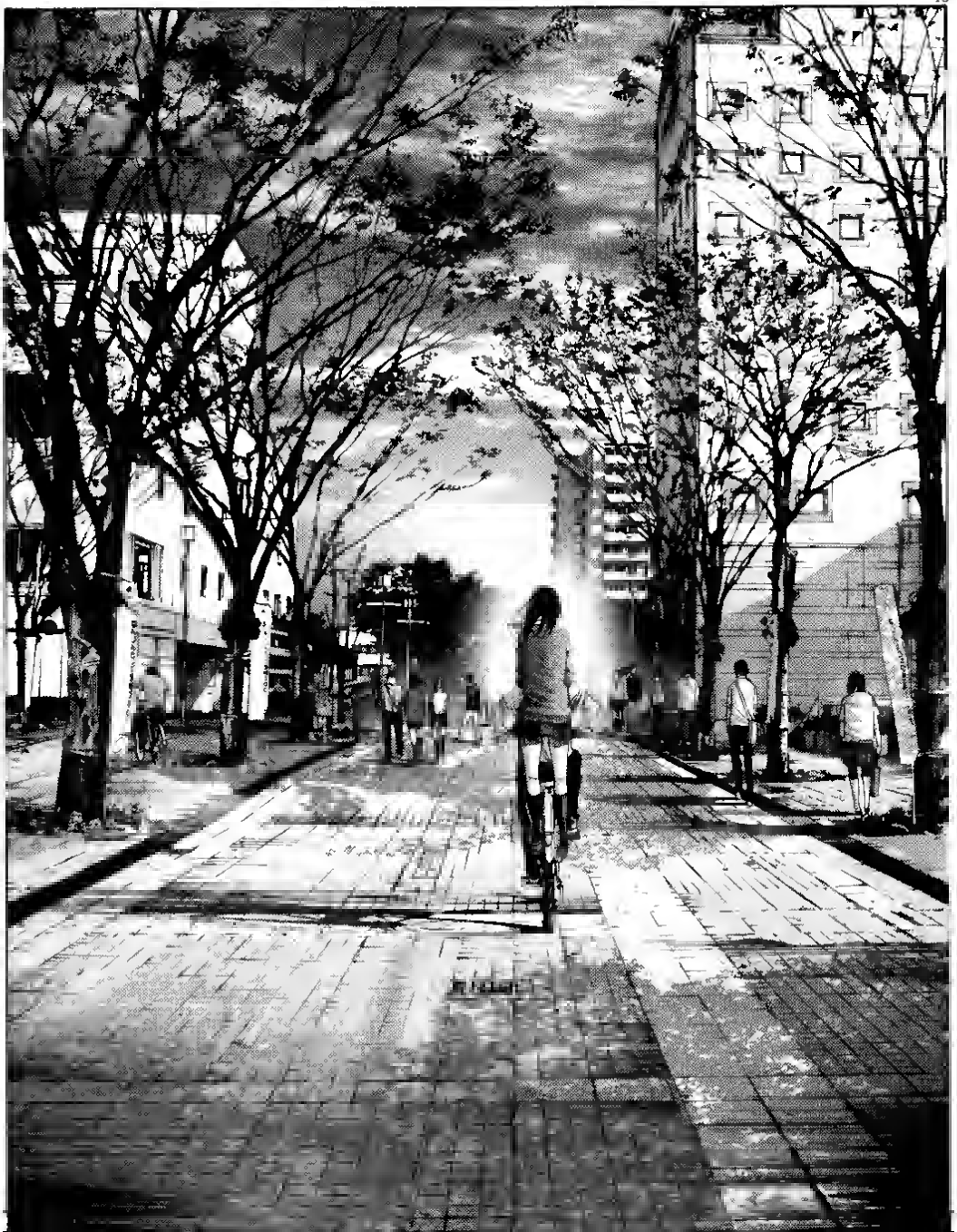
But on the other hand, it's kind of scary how simplistic I am now,

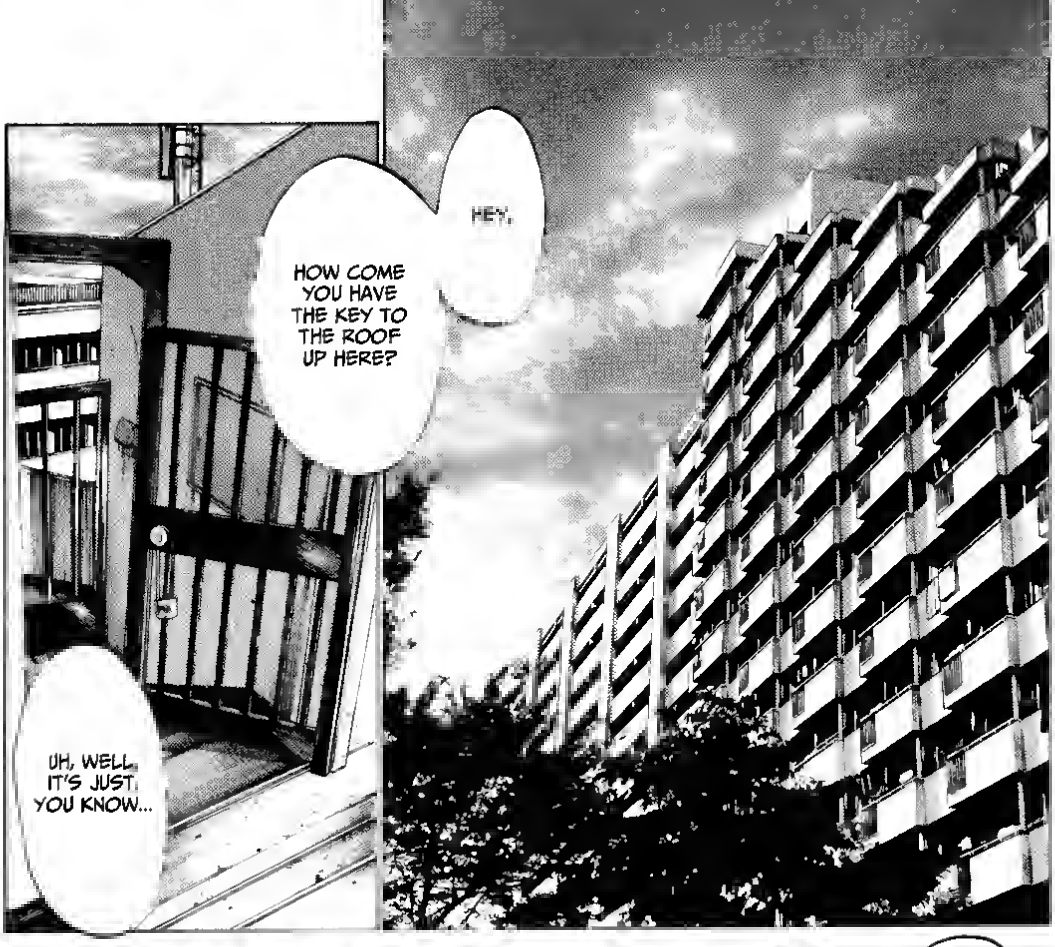
Sometimes I don't even know who I am.

Where on earth did the old me go?

It's like...

...the end of
the world.





*PAPICO IS A BRAND OF ICE CREAM IN A SQUEEZABLE BOTTLE.

IT IS, HUH...
SEEMS LIKE IT WAS JUST SUMMER NOT THAT LONG AGO...

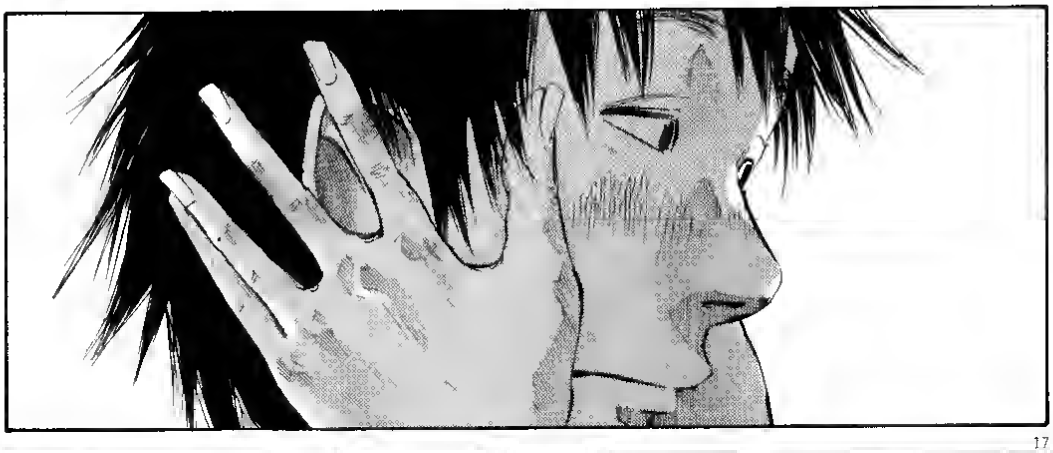
I HATE WINTER. IT'S TOO LONG.
WHICH DO YOU LIKE BETTER, SUMMER OR WINTER?

THIS IS BORING.
CAN'T YOU TALK ABOUT SOMETHING MORE INTERESTING?

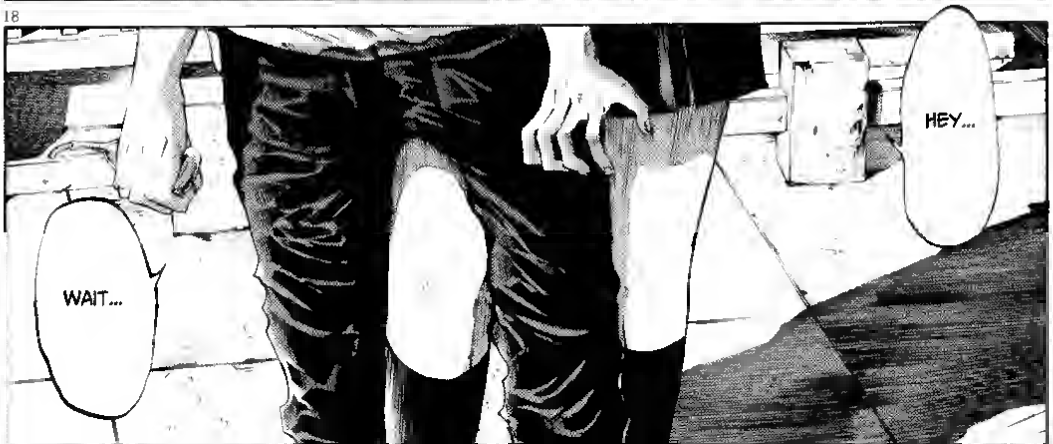
I *KNOW* ABOUT THIS PLACE, YOU KNOW...

I HEARD WHEN KOTOMI FROM CLASS 2 AND IDE FROM CLASS 5 CAME UP HERE, THEY ENDED UP GOING ALL THE WAY.
IT'S FAMOUS AS A MAKE-OUT SPOT.

WHOA!
YOU... COME ON!
EVEN IF YOU DO KNOW THAT STUFF...
...YOU SHOULDN'T BRING IT UP!



I'M SICK OF WAITING.


HEY...
WAIT...

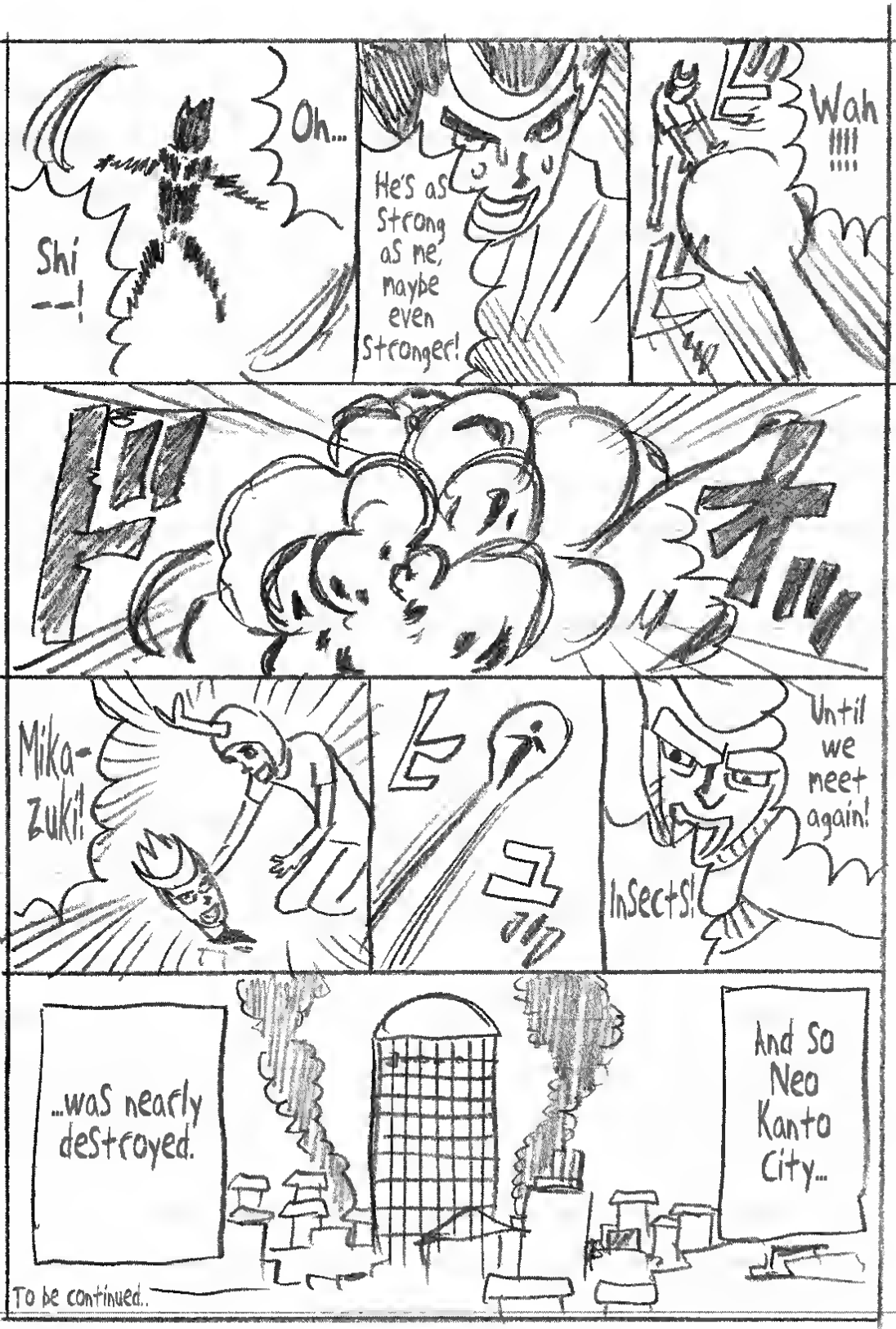
W-WAIT A SEC...
TIME OUT...

WHY?

YOU'RE SO DUMB...

BUT I LOVE YOU ANYWAY.

What ?!
I'll finish you off in the blink of an eye!
He... he's fast!
Wa ha ha ha ha...
M-Mika-zuki!
Take this!



Is there any way to defeat the Demon Lord Gildark ?!!

Find out in vol. 19!

Before Dawn and the End of the World
-END-